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BY

JAMES COMPER GRAY,

Author of "Topics for Teachers," "The Class and the Desk," &c., &c.

OLD TESTAMENT.

VOL. VIII.

Containing the Book of Isaiah.

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THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.

Introduction.

Author. Isaiah (= *salvation of Jehovah*), in the N.T. (fr. LXX. and Vulg.) spelled Esaias. Of his personal hist. little is known. He was son of one Amos (i. 1), confounded by some with the Prophet of that name: and *said* to be bro. of K. Amaziah. He was mar. (viii. 3), and his wife was called a prophetess. He may have worn hair-cloth (xx. 2), but there is no reason to believe he was an ascetic. Receiving the Divine call in last year of Uzziah (vi.), he continued to prophesy during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (i. 1). Some say he lived into reign of Manasseh; and acc. to trad. suffered martyrdom by being sawn asunder (Heb. xi. 37). He is said to have written a "History of the Acts of King Uzziah" (2 Ch. xxvi. 22), wh. has been lost. **Time.** B.C. 765-618. **Style.** "He is at once elegant and sublime, forcible and ornamental: he unites energy with copiousness, and dignity with variety. In his sentiments there is uncommon elevation and majesty: in his imagery the utmost propriety, elegance, dignity, and diversity; in his language uncommon beauty and energy; and, notwithstanding the obscurity of his subjects, a surprising degree of clearness and simplicity" (*Lowth*). **Scope.** So much more fully and clearly does Isa. predict the Messiah and disc. His kingdom, than any other Prophet, that he is styled "the Evangelical Prophet." His chief prophecies are the captivities (xxxix. 6, 7), the ruin of various nations (xiii. 19—22, xiv. 22—24, xlvii.). He threatens the destr. of Syria and Israel (vii. 1, 2, 18, xvii.) accomp. by K. of Assyria (viii. 4), Tiglath-pileser (2 K. xv. 29). He encouraged Ahaz (vii. 1) and Hezekiah (2 K xix. 2: Isa. xxxvii 21). Predicted Cyrus nearly 200 yrs. bef. his birth (xliv. 28, xlv. 1—5). But he especially predicts the Messiah,—His Divine character (vii. 14, vi., ix 6, xxxv. 4, xl. 5, 9, 10, xlii. 6—8, lxi. 1, lxii. 11), His miracles (xxxv. 5, 6), His character (xi. 2, 3, xl. 11, xliii. 1—3), His rejection (vi. 9—12, viii. 14, xlix. 7, liii. 3), His sufferings (i 6, lxiii. 4—11), His death and burial (liii. 8, 9), His resurrection (xxv. 8, lii. 10), His final glory (xlix. 7, 22, 23, liv. 13—15), and the establishment, increase (ii. 2—4, ix. 7, xlii. 4, xlvi. 13), and perfection of His Kingdom (ix. 2, 7, xi. 4—10, xvi. 5, xxix. 18—24, xxxii. 1, xl. 4, 5, xlix. 9—13, li. 3—6, lii. 6—10, lv. 1—3, lix. 16—21, lx., lxi. 1—5, lxv. 25). The *special prophecies* respecting Christ are—His forerunner (xl. 3), His family (xi. 10), His birth (vii. 14), His name and kingdom (ix. 6, 7), His preaching and miracles (xi. 4, lxi. 1—3, xxxv. 5, 6), His sufferings (liii.), His rejection by the Jews (viii. 14, lxv. 15), His reception by the Gentiles (xlix. 6, 7; Acts xiii. 47).

Note on prophecy.—The mind of God was conveyed to the Prophets in various ways. In dreams, in visions, or by an influence upon the mind of which the subjects were conscious, they received the Divine inspiration, and by a strong internal impulse were constrained to deliver their message. Many of the symbolical acts which the Prophets are represented as performing, such as Jeremiah's hiding the girdle near the River Euphrates (Jer. xiii. 1—9), a distance from Jerusalem of about twenty days), are reasonably supposed to have passed before their minds in vision. This must have been the case with those manifestations of the Divine presence which are more than once recorded 1 Kings xxii. 17—19; Isa. iv. 1 (*Litton*).

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1. **vision,**[a] supernatural perception, inspiration, revelation. Comp. the former term used for a prophet, *viz.* a *seer*. **Isaiah,** *lit.* The salvation of Jehovah. A name very significant of the subject of his prophecies. **Amos,** properly Amotz, not the Prophet Amos, nor the brother of Amaziah, king of Judah. **Judah,** the kingdom of the two tribes. **Jerusalem,** its capital and central city.[b] All Is.'s prophecies bear directly on the interests of God's covenant people. **Uzziah,** *etc.*, kings of Judah from B.C. 810 to 698.

God's charges against His people (*vv.* 1—9).—I. The striking preamble with which these charges are introduced (*v.* 2). 1. We are shown the importance of what is going to be uttered; 2. Its publicity; 3. Its veracity. II. The several particulars which these charges embody. 1. Ingratitude; 2. Ignorance and inconsideration; 3. Abounding transgressions; 4. Incorrigibleness; 5. Spiritual loathsomeness. III. The retribution with which these evils were visited. 1. The severity of God; 2. The goodness of God.

Prophecy.—The sweet stream of the prophet's doctrine did. as the rivers, make its own banks fertile and pleasant. as it ran by and flowed still forward to after ages, and by the confluence of more such prophecies grew greater as it went, till it fell in with the main current of the Gospel in the New Testament. both acted and preached by the Great Prophet Himself, whom they foretold to come, and recorded by His apostles and evangelists. and thus united into one river. clear as crystal. This doctrine of salvation in the Scriptures hath still refreshed the city of God, His Church, under the Gospel, and still shall do so, till it empty itself iuto the ocean of eternity.[c]

2—4. (2) **hear, O heavens,**[a] *comp.* Deut. xxxii. 1. **hath spoken,** *comp.* He. i. 1. **children,** term indicating special relationship.[b] **rebelled,** apostatised, with ref. to the national idolatry.[c] (3) **the ox,** *etc.*, for appeal to the habits of animals, see Je. viii. 7. The instinctive regard of animals for the owner who finds them shelter and food, is contrasted with Israel's wilful neglect of God the Father. **crib,** place where the fodder is put for him. (4) **laden with iniquity,** bec. sin surely *becomes* a burden and *brings* a burden.[d] **corrupters,** that corrupt themselves and one another. Sinners easily become tempters. **holy . . Israel,** a title almost peculiar to Isaiah,[e] and found all through his book.

Inconsiderateness (*v.* 3).—Why do not men consider? 1. Not for want of opportunity; 2. Not for want of encouragement. I. The reasons of inconsiderateness. 1. It saves intellectual trouble; 2. It saves moral compunction: 3. It escapes social obligation. II. Its results. 1. Practical atheism; 2. Spiritual feebleness: 3. Needless alarm: 4. Self-deprivation. Learn:—There is hope of any man who is thoughtful.

An ass returning home.—In March, 1816, an ass, the property of Captain Dundas, R.N., then at Malta, was shipped on board the *Ister* frigate, Captain Forrest, bound from Gibraltar for that island. The vessel having struck on some sands off the Point

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a "Isaiah was enabled to *see* the moral corruption which was lurking beneath the fair surface of external forms and specious shows of religion."—*Wordsworth.*

b Jerus., Judah, Israel, are, from Is. vii. on, the centre of prophecy in such a way that they form three concentric circles, of which Jerusalem is the smallest, Jerusalem and Judah the wider, while Jerusalem, Judah, and Israel is the widest. To these three the heathen world joins on as a fourth circle."—*Caspari.*

c 1. *R. Warner*, i. 9.

vv. 1, 2. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iii. 9.

c Abp. Leighton.

a De. lv. 25, 26, xxx. 18, 19, xxxi. 28, 29.

"Heaven and earth were present and participants when Jehovah gave His people the law (De. iv. 36), so then must they hear and witness what Jehovah, their Creator, and Israel's God, has to say and complain of (after seven centuries)."—*Delitzsch.*

b Ex. iv. 22; De. xxxii. 5, 6; Ho. xi. 1; Mal. i. 2, 6; Ro. ix. 4.

c "Especially by violating that peculiar covenant which bound God

de Gat, at some distance from the shore, the ass was thrown overboard, to give it a chance of swimming to land,—a poor one, for the sea was running so high that a boat which left the ship was lost. A few days afterwards, however, when the gates of Gibraltar were opened in the morning, the ass presented himself for admittance, and proceeded to the stable of Mr. Weeks, a merchant, which he had formerly occupied, to the no small surprise of this gentleman, who imagined that, from some accident, the animal had never been shipped on board the *Ister*. On the return of this vessel to repair, the mystery was explained; and it turned out that the ass had not only swam safely to shore, but had found his way from Point de Gat to Gibraltar, a distance of more than two hundred miles, through a mountainous and intricate country, intersected by streams which he had never traversed before, and in so short a period that he could not have made one false turn. His not having been stopped on the road was attributed to the circumstance of his having been formerly used to whip criminals upon, which was indicated to the peasants, who have a superstitious horror of such asses, by the holes in his ears, to which the persons flogged were tied.[g]

5, 6. (5) **why . . more?** or, "whereupon," *i.e.* on what part of the body "can ye be stricken?" since already they had passed under such chastisements.[a] Or, "To what purpose shall one smite you more?" seeing you will learn nothing under the most gracious chastisement.[b] **whole . . faint,**[c] referring rather to their punishments than their sins. They are covered all over with the marks and signs of Divine chastisement. (6) Amplification of the previous statement. Israel was like a child so punished, beaten, and bruised, that there seemed no place left on wh. new blows might fall. **mollified,** "the art of medicine in the E. consists chiefly in *external* applications."[d] **ointment,** or olive oil.

The sinfulness and incorrigibleness of the nation (*vv.* 4, 5).—These words lead us to set before you—I. Our sinfulness. 1. The general description of the Jews is equally suitable to us; 2. So also is the particular charge. II. Our incorrigibleness. 1. What improvement have we made of our chastisements? 2. What reason have we to hope that our troubles will be sanctified to our good? Apply:—1. Adore God for His long patience; 2. Tremble at His judgments; 3. Take encouragement from His present dealings with us.[e]

Disease of the body.—We are so prone to content ourselves with a general reading, without taking up particulars, in order to submit them to a distinct and patient scrutiny, that it is no marvel that many interesting circumstances escape our notice. The verse gives a compendious view of the surgical treatment adopted for three several derangements of the human body. The questions that arise out of this affecting description are these:—Did the Prophet nicely understand what he was speaking of? or did he fall in with the popular style, and use general terms? A little examination will set the matter in its true light. The Prophet speaks first of that kind of injury which is called a "wound," where the continuity of the soft parts has been broken through, by the violence of some external cause. Let us look at the treatment: "they have not been closed," or, "they have not closed it." The business of the surgeon, in the case of an incised or cut wound, is, as soon as the blood is staunched, to bring the

to His people."—*J. A. Alexander.*

De. xxxii. 5, 6, 15.

d "The fig. of a burden most naturally conveys the notion of the oppressive property of guilt, and the unsupportable punishment which it entails."—*E. Henderson.*

e 2 Ki. xix. 22; Ps. lxxi. 22, lxxviii.41, lxxxix. 18; Eze. xxxix. 7.

f Dr. Parker.

g Hancock.

a J. A. Alexander, and so *Jerome,* etc.

b Nägelsbach.

"They had found that the stroke of God's rod had always, in severe mercy, followed sin. Why then did they continue to revolt, and provoke this ever-advancing series of Divine punishments, when already the body was one mass of festering stripe-wounds?"—*Spk. Com.*

Jer. ii. 30, v. 3.

c "The two noblest parts of the human body are here selected to represent the body politic."—*E. Henderson.*

d "Among all nations, in the early stage of medical practice, attention was in a great degree confined to outward applications, and what we should now call surgical practice."—*Kitto.*

e C. Simeon, M.A.

divided parts together, and to secure them in that position by a suture, or by strips of adhesive plaster. If this is done with skill and adroitness, then the patient is likely soon to be well. The second derangement referred to is a bruise, or, as it is otherwise called, a contused wound, where blood has been squeezed out of its vessels, the cellular tissue has been broken, and other disorganisations taken place. The treatment suggested is, "bound up," that is, with poultices, to lessen the inflammation, and to hasten those processes by which the shattered parts are restored to their pristine integrity. The third disorder set down is the ulcer, or putrefying sore, whereof the treatment pointed out is the mollifying effect of ointment, which coincides with the most approved practice of modern times. "The more unctuous the substances are the better," says Mr. Castle, in his *Manual of Surgery;* "for they assist that process called granulation, by which the lost parts are restored, and the wound is filled up with materials duly organised." From this we may gather that the Prophet was not unacquainted with the surgical knowledge of his time, and that the practice in some particulars coincides with our own. This is one among many other proofs, that the sacred writers did not set down popular notions at random, or at second-hand, but, even in temporal concernments, spoke of what they understood and knew. At the same time, it gives us a gentle admonition about noting, with increased attention, all the little words and phrases of the Bible.

v. 5. *Dr. H. Hammond*, iv. 532.

vv. 5, 6. *W. Dunlop*, ii. 3.

"For of a truth, stupidity is strong—most strong—as the poet Schiller sings, 'Against stupidity the very gods fight unvictorious.' There is in it a placid inexhaustibility—a calm, viscous infinitude, which will baffle even the gods—which will say calmly, 'Try all your lightnings here, see whether I cannot quench them!'" *Carlyle.*

7—9. (7) **desolate**, or a desolation. Ref. is to the ravages of the Syrians in Joash's reign, the effects of wh. remained in Uzziah's time. Or there may be prophetic intimations of the invasions in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah. **strangers**, used by God as the agents of His chastisements.[a] (8) **daughter of Zion**, poetic name for Jerusalem:[b] here meaning "the faithful Church."[c] **cottage**, *etc.*,[d] temporary covert of leaves and branches put up by the vineyard-keeper while the fruit needs watching, and allowed to fall into ruin when the fruit is gathered. **cucumbers**, or melons,[e] **besieged**, or watched, cut off from outside communication. (9) **as Sodom**,[f] *i.e.* we should have come into altogether overwhelming judgments from God.

Cottage in a vineyard.—This allusion is illustrated by the following passage from Sir William Hamilton's account of Mount Vesuvius:—"In the vineyards there were several straw huts, which had been erected for the watchmen of the grapes." They remind us of those alluded to by Isaiah. The daughter of Zion plainly means Jerusalem, and the comparison is designed to convey an idea of loneliness and desolation, such as resulted from invading armies, destroying all before them with fire and sword (ver. 7), till Jerusalem itself was left alone to withstand the foe. Extensive fields of ripe melons and cucumbers adorn the sides of the river (Nile); they grow in such abundance, that the sailors freely helped themselves. Some guard, however, is placed upon them. Occasionally, but at long and desolate intervals, we may observe a little hut, made of reeds, just capable of containing one man, being, in fact, little more than a fence against a north wind. In these I have observed, sometimes, a poor old man, perhaps lame, feebly protecting the property. It exactly illustrates the above passage. The abundance of these most necessary vegetables brings to mind the murmurs of the Israelites (Numb.

a Comp. De. xxviii. 48, 50, 51.

b "The city grouped around the fortress of Zion, and nestling in its shade." —*Wordsworth.*

c *Spk. Com.*

d "A rude hut, standing on piles, in which a man was stationed by night to scare away jackals and other wild animals."—*Tristram.*

e "Longer than the common cucumber, of a deeper green, a softer and smoother skin, sweeter, and more easy of digestion; being very cooling, they are greatly in request."—*E. Henderson.*

f Eze. xvi. 49; see Ge. xix. 24, 25; 2 Pe. ii. 6.

xi. 5, 6), "We remember . . . the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic; but now our soul is dried away." [g]

10, 11. (10) rulers of Sodom, addressing them as if they were as bad as Sodom.[a] "He invests them with the character wh. they had been accustomed to regard as peculiar to the abandoned inhabitants of those cities." The word "rulers" refers to the *cadi*, or judges,[b] regarded as leaders of the people's wickedness. (11) multitude . . me? *i.e.* sacrifices merely, wh. are only formalities, and do not express the trust and love of your hearts.[c] For the diff. kinds of offerings and sacrifices see the Books of Exodus and Leviticus.

The service which alone is pleasing to God (*vv.* 10—17).—From the text we see—I. The inadequacy of ritual observances. Hence—This address may be applied to self-righteous formalists; 2. To many who make a profession of vital godliness. II. The necessity of moral attainments. In relation to these two things are required—1. A renunciation of accustomed sins; 2. A performance of neglected duties. Hence see—(1) The nature of true religion; (2) The danger of self-conceit; (3) The excellency of the Gospel.[d]

Noble self-sacrifice.—We have read of Leonidas and his brave three hundred compatriots stopping the ravaging march of the Persians at Thermopylæ, and devoting themselves to the salvation of their country. We have read of the king of the Locrians, who, when his son had broken the laws, the demand of which was that both his eyes should be put out, mitigated the punishment by giving in exchange for one of them an eye of his own; thus enduring, self-devotedly, a part of the suffering allotted to his child. We have read of the queen who sucked the poison from the wound of the king her consort, though convinced that death would be the consequence of her heroic act. We have read of the Polish servant, who, when pursued by wolves, first gave up his horse to be devoured, then yielded up his own body to the rapacious animals to stay their pursuit, while his master and mistress—the Count and Countess Podotsky—got safely within the walls of the adjacent city. And numerous have been the instances wherein soldiers have caught the death blows intended for their commanders—not merely risking, but devoting their own lives for the salvation of a life which they held to be more important than their own. And is such conduct reprobated by the general mass of mankind? Is it pointed out as an abuse of the instinct of self-preservation, an impropriety, a discordance with the general tenor of experience, and irreconcilable with the facts of the physical universe? Far from it. Why, then, should the sacrifice of Christ [e]

12, 13. (12) tread, or merely trample my courts with crowds of animals.[a] (13) vain oblations,[b] *i.e.* offerings with no *heart* in them. Lit. *lying meat-offerings.* No service can be acceptable to God while iniquity is not hated and forsaken. incense, wh. should be the outward sign of devotion of heart. new moons, *etc.*, your specially holy seasons and gatherings. solemn meeting, the eighth day of Feast of Tabernacles, and the seventh day of the Passover.[c] Lit. "I cannot stand iniquity and the solemn meeting, the combination of the two.

g Jowett.

a Re. xi. 8.

b Arab proverb—"More unjust than a judge of Sodom." — *Gesenius.*

c Pr. xv. 8, xxi. 27; Is. lxvi. 3; Je. vi. 20; Am. v. 21; Mic. vi. 6—12.

"The people of Jerus. pleaded their displays of religious zeal and devotion in the services and sacrifices of the temple, as a bar to the Prophet's severe verdict upon them. He says, they are mere empty shows, hypocritical masques and disguises."—*Wordsworth.*

d C. Simeon, *M.A.*

v. 10. *J. Cawood*, i. 379; *H. Vershoyle*, 366; *H. Binning*, iii. 16.

v. 11. *St. Augustine*, vii. 209; *W. Reading*, ii. 626; *E. M. Goulburn*, 429.

"A stubborn mind conduces as little to wisdom, or even to knowledge, as a stubborn temper to happiness."—*Southey.*

e T. Ragg.

a "A term of contempt purposely borrowed from the action of the cattle brought into the outer court for sacrifice."—*E. Henderson.*

b Le. ii. 1—3;

Nu. xxviii. 12, etc.

Comp. Mat. xxi. 12, 13.

c Le. xxiii. 36; Nu. xxix. 35; De. xvi. 8.

v. 12. *A. B. Evans*, 127.

vv. 12, 13. *Dr. J. Disney*, iii. 181.

d *Whitecross.*

a 1 Ki. viii. 38, 54; 1 Ti. ii. 8.

b "Nothing could be more incongruous than to spread open to the view of Holy Omniscience hands which had been stained by acts of atrocious wickedness."—*E. Henderson.*

"Under the term *blood* all sins of violence and gross injustice are to be comprehended."—*Calvin.*

c *Thomas.*

"When, to gratify a private appetite, it is once resolved upon that an ignorant and helpless creature shall be sacrificed, 'tis an easy matter to pick up sticks enough from any thicket where it has strayed, to make a fire to offer it up with."—*Sterne.*

d *A. Barrett.*

a Ex. xxx. 19—21.

"Heart-cleans-

Motives to, and effects of, public worship.—A minister of the Gospel one day finding a servant beating his master's horses, and taking the name of God in vain, stood still and reproved him sharply. The servant made no reply; but, prompted by curiosity, came next Lord's-day to hear his reprover preach. "Swear not at all," said the preacher, when concluding his discourse, "is a Divine command, that binds both master and servant. I knew a man who not long ago surprised one of the swearing tribe of servants, in the very act of damning his master's horses. The son of Belial, though challenged, durst not open his mouth for his father's interest; but hung his head like a coward in the devil's service. He passed by, and had not the manners to thank his reprover, or grace to promise amendment. Is he here? Do I see him? Shall I name him?" After some pause, he added, "We shall rather pray for him." The servant was sitting trembling before him; and it may be proper to add, that he came afterwards to the minister, confessed his fault, gave signs of true penitence, was added to the church, and never afterwards heard to blaspheme the worthy name.[d]

14, 15. (14) **appointed feasts,** the weekly Sab.; the two great festivals, the Feast of Trumpets, and the Day of Atonement. These were ordained by God Himself. **a trouble,** or painful annoyance, (15) **spread . . hands,** a very usual and appropriate gesture of prayer.[a] **full of blood,** the traces of violence and crime.[b] Lit. *bloods.*

God oppressed (*v.* 11).—God, being the holiest, feels sin the most. The language indicates—1. The exquisite sensibility of God; 2. The amazing patience of God; 3. The remedial agency of God.[c]

Abuse of holiness.—Christian holiness is no fabrication of man, and differs as much from ritual and conventional sanctity as the temple filled with God differed from the same temple just as it was left by the builder's hand. To be holy is not to be wrapt in entranced and unearthly contemplation, as was Simeon Stylites, and the so-called pillar saint. It is not to retire into solitude, to leave the active duties of life and the trying anxieties of the Church unto others, with a view to gain that grace in seclusion which Christ has chiefly promised to impart to His people in fellowship (Eph. ii. 5, 6), as did Basil. It is not to be clad with a white garment at Easter, and in connection with others, a surpliced band, to overawe the imagination with the shadow of piety, as did the catechumens of Chrysostom. It is not to take monastic vows, to cross the Creator's design, to forsake domestic life, as devout men were advised to do by Jerome. It is not to interlard our common conversation with religious phrases and passages of Scripture, and to be continually adverting to the feelings and actings of the soul, as did Oliver Cromwell, and the more rigid of the Presbyterian Puritans. It is not to bend and bow before patterns of sacred things, as did Archbishop Laud, and as do the modern tractarians. It is not to invest the family circles to which we belong with the solemnity of a funeral, and to cast upon every person and thing the frown of a rebuking censorship.[d]

16, 17. (16) **wash you,** comp. the duty of priests before sacrificing.[a] **put away . . eyes,** "to remove their ill-doings

from before the All-seeing Eyes, was, in fact, altogether to cease from it."[b] (17) judgment, the expression of righteousness in our actions and relations. relieve, or righten. Ill-treatment of the orphan and widow[c] are sure signs of a low state of public morality. The righteous are merciful and tender.

Repentance necessary (*v.* 16).—I. God doth primarily desire the good of all His creatures. II. He doth not desire man's salvation without his return. III. He doth not desire man's return without his own consent.[d]

Recollections of a sermon.—An eminently useful clergyman writes thus:—One sermon, or one single sentence of a sermon, may be like a nail driven in a sure place, which never through a long life loses its hold; or like a seed which lies hidden for a long season, but at length takes root and bears fruit. I well remember that the first serious impression made on my own mind was by the text of a stranger who preached at K. L. church, when I was five or six years old. I remembered nothing of the sermon, but it is impossible to trace the full and blessed influence which his text produced in after years.[e] It was Isaiah i. 18.—*Forgiveness of sin.*—Sins as red as scarlet, sins as numerous as the stars, or as the sands by the sea-shore innumerable, and nature as black as hell, a heart as wicked as the devil, the Divine and eternally precious blood of Jesus can so cleanse and purify, that not one spot shall remain; for He is Almighty. He has all power in heaven and earth to pardon sin. If I had been guilty of all the sins of Adam and Eve, and of all their descendants to this day, yet believing in Him, I should be safe, because His blood cleanseth from all sin.[f]

18. reason, or confer: *i.e.* when you are truly penitent, and I see the signs in the putting away of evil. as scarlet, . . red like crimson,[a] the colour of blood, as previously referred to. white as snow, so exquisitely white when fresh-fallen. as wool, when newly washed.

Forgiveness (*v.* 18).—I. There is assumed the existence of enormous guilt. 1. "Scarlet" and "crimson" indicate sins of peculiar flagrancy; 2. Sin extends to the whole human race; 3. These principles extend to ourselves; 4. The great sin is the neglect of the great salvation. II. There is the promised bestowment of pardoning mercy. 1. This promise is consistent with the holiness and justice of God; 2. Note the manner in which the promised blessing is bestowed; 3. The sufficiency by which this promised blessing of forgiveness is characterised. III. There is desired the exercise of wise consideration. Procrastinate not a moment longer. Believe the saving testimony *now*. Wash in the fountain *now*. Seek for glory, honour, and immortality *now*.[b]

Purple (Heb. *argaman*).—The name of a valuable dye obtained from shell-fish on the coasts of the Mediterranean. Phœnicia was particularly celebrated for its production, and the Tyrian dye was renowned throughout the ancient world. It was procured from two species of shell-fish, the *Murex brandaris* and *Murex trunculus*, and occasionally also from *Purpura hæmastoma*, but chiefly from the first-named. To the present day, thick layers of crushed shells of *Murex brandaris* may be found near Tyre, the remains of this extinct industry, and recalling the Mons Testaceus of Rome or the kitchen-middens of Denmark. The colouring, turning away from evil, proper fruits of repentance: such is the Divine service that the Lord requires."—*Nägelsbach.*

b Spk. Com.

c "Orphans and widows are continually spoken of in Scripture as special objects of Divine compassion, and as representing the whole class of helpless innocents."—*J. Alexander.*

d Dr. B. Whichcot (1690).

v. 16. *H. Binning*, iii. 34; *J. Clowes*, 120.

vv. 16, 17. *Abp. Secker*, ii. 267; *Dr. S. Elsmere*, i. 158; *M. Wynyard*, 147; *Chr. Benson*, *Hulsean Lect.* 362.

e R. T. S.

f W. Romaine.

a "Scarlet was regarded as the most fast or fixed of colours. Neither dew, nor rain, nor washing, nor long use could remove it."—*Kitto.*

With the Jews, white was the symbol of purity, red of crime, especially of cruelty and murder.

Mi. vii. 18, 19; Is. xliii. 25, 26; Ps. li. 7; 1 Jno. i. 7.

b J. Parsons.

v. 18. *J. C. Dieterici, Ant.* 556; *J. Gastin*, 213; *G. Burder*, iii. 133; *E. Cooper*, vii. 36; *T. Biddulph*, iii. 205; *E. Blencowe*, iii. 14.

"Sincerity is the most compendious wisdom, and an excellent instrument for the speedy despatch

of business. It is like travelling in a plain beaten road, which commonly brings a man sooner to his journey's end than byways, in which men often lose themselves." —*Tillotson.*

It is said that it makes no difference what a man believes, if he is only sincere. But it does make a great difference. If a man mounts a wild steed, and makes full speed for a precipice, an I means to slip off before he gets to it, his very insincerity will save him. But if he says, "I don't believe there is anychasm there," his sincerity will bring him to the bottom.

"I had rather confess my ignorance than falsely profess knowledge: it is no shame not to know all things, but it is a just shame to overreach in anything."—*Bishop Hall.*

c Tristram.

ing matter was extracted from a small vessel in the throat of the animal, each shell yielding only a single drop, after which the whole fish was crushed to procure an inferior dye. It is not quite certain what the colour was, whether scarlet or purple, for the Hebrew word, as well as its Greek and Latin equivalents, seems to have been used for any bright colour, from scarlet or crimson to purple proper: while blue appears to have been extracted from another shell-fish, probably a *Buccinum*. Thus, what is called a purple robe by St. John is termed "scarlet" by St. Matthew (Jno. xix. 2; Mat. xxvii. 28). These colours were the insignia of royalty or of high office among the Jews, as among the Greeks. Thus the kings of Midian, Mordecai, and Daniel are recorded to have been invested with scarlet or purple robes. The art of extracting dye from these shell-fish is now completely lost, but experiments have been made by which an inferior dye has been produced. The juice is at first white; on exposure to the atmosphere it becomes green, and afterwards redder, finally settling into a deep red purple. Pliny has left an account of the ancient process of procuring it. The wool was steeped in the liquid prior to its being spun or woven, and wool prepared at Tyre fetched an enormous price in the markets of Rome.—*Crimson worm.*—The Hebrew *tola'ath*, meaning the crimson worm, is always translated in our version by "crimson" (Is. i. 18), or by "scarlet" elsewhere, as in many passages in Exodus, describing the colours used in draping the tabernacle; in Le. iv. 5, and Ne. ii. 3, the word "worm" being omitted, as in most passages the dye obtained from it, and not the worm itself, is intended. The animal is a *cochineal*, an homopterous insect (*Coccus ilicis*), of which the male, in its *imago* state, is winged, and the female, which is more than double its size, is wingless, attaching itself to the leaves and twigs of the Syrian Holm-oak (*Quercus coccifera*), from the juices of which it derives its sustenance. From the female alone the dye is procured. It is about the size of the kernel of a cherry, and of a dark red colour, but when dried shrivels up to less than the size of a grain of wheat. It is very common in Palestine, and still occasionally employed in dyeing, though commercially it has been supplanted by a nearly allied species, *Coccus cacti*, a native of Mexico, which lives on the cactus, or prickly pear, and has been introduced with that plant into all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, and is cultivated in several parts of the Holy Land, as at Nablous, the ancient Shechem. Its Arabic name is *kermez*, whence our word "crimson" has ultimately been derived.[c]

19, 20. (19) willing, to enter into this conference. obedient, prepared to carry out your penitence into life-service. the good, *i.e.* the best fruitage of the land.[a] (20) refuse, *etc.*, unwilling to be humbled; unwilling to seek forgiveness. devoured, *etc.*, in the Div. judgments that will surely come. mouth, *etc.*, "this is the Div. seal set on Is.'s prophecies."[b]

The magnitude of Divine pity.—God's pity is not as some sweet cordial poured in dainty drops from some golden phial. It is not like the musical water-drops of some slender rill, murmuring down the dark sides of Mount Sinai. It is wide as the whole scope of heaven. It is abundant as all the air. If one had art to gather up all the golden sunlight that to-day falls wide over

a "Temporal blessings, 'in the land of their possession,' were prominent in the O. T. promises, adsuited to the childhood of the Church. Ex. iii. 17."—*Fausset.*

b Is. xxi. 17, xxii. 25, xxiv. 3, xxv. 8, xl. 5, lviii. 14.

vv. 19, 20. *H. Stebbing*, iii. 289.

all tais continent, falling through every silent hour; and all that is dispersed over the whole ocean, flashing from every wave; and all that is poured refulgent over the northern wastes of ice, and along the whole continent of Europe. and the vast outlying Asia, and torrid Africa: if one could in any wise gather up this immense and incalculable outflow and treasure of sunlight that falls down through the bright hours. and runs in liquid ether about the mountains, and fills all the plains, and sends innumerable rays through every secret place, pouring over and filling every flower, shining down the sides of every blade of grass, resting in glorious humility upon the humblest things —on stick and stone and pebble, on the spider's web. the sparrow's nest, the threshold of the young fox's hole, where they play and warm themselves; that rests on the prisoner's window, that strikes radiant beams through the slave's tear, that puts gold upon the widow's weeds, that plates and roofs the city with burnished gold, and goes on in its wild abundance up and down the earth. shining everywhere and always since the day of primal creation, without faltering, without stint, without waste or diminution, as full, as fresh, as overflowing, to-day, as if it were the first day of its outplay;—if one might gather up this boundless, endless, infinite treasure, to measure it, .then might he tell the height and depth, and unending glory of the pity of God. In light,—in the sun its source,—you have God's own figure of the immensity and copiousness of His mercy and compassion.[c]

21—23. (21) how, *etc.*, spoken after a pause in wh. the Prophet had vainly waited for a response. faithful city,[a] that once was faithful. The term includes the city and the State; the Church, of wh. Jerus. was the centre and metropolis. harlot, by being faithless to her covenant with Jehovah. murderers, the worst class of violent wrong-doers put to include all others.[b] (22) silver . . wine, with special reference to the nobles and leaders of the land.[c] mixed, lit. *stabbed*. The Arabs curiously call diluting wine "murdering" it. (23) princes, those called "silver" in the prev. *v.* companions, better, accomplices, since they winked at injustice. rewards, bribes. judge, *etc.*, as *v.* 17.

Oppression of the poor.—The selfishness and cruelty of the Greenland character are most manifest in the treatment of widows and orphans. When a poor destitute widow that has no near relations, lies with her children on the ground. bewailing the loss of her husband almost to distraction, she is visited by her neighbours, who, at the same time that they bear the accents of condolence on the tongue, only seek their own advantage by purloining the property of her deceased husband. The despoiled widow has no court of judicature in which to lodge her complaint or to sue for a recovery; and so she and her children must submit to the cruel injustice of her countrymen. A little while they protract life, by eating fish, mussels, and sea-grass, but finally they must starve and freeze to death, having no clothing or lamp-oil. Thus it may be truly said of this heathen people, "Every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them:"[d]

24—27. (24) the Lord, *Heb.* Adonai. Lord of hosts,[a]

"The wages that sin bargains with the sinner, are life, pleasure, and profit; but the wages it pays him with are death, torment, and destruction: he that would understand the falsehood and deceit of sin, must compare its promises and payments together." —*South.*

"'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours, and ask them what report they bore to heaven, and how they might have borne more welcome news."—*Young.*

c H. W. Beecher.

a "The Hebrew nation, espoused in mystical wedlock to Jehovah at Sinai, has become a harlot by following strange gods."—*Wordsworth.*

b Comp. condition of city in Manasseh's reign. 2 Ki. xxi. 16, xxiv. 4. *Spk. Com.* comp. the condition of Jerusalem in the siege that followed on the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

c "The silver is said to be turned into dross, and the pure wine is be mixed with water, when judges and senators turn from purity and grave manners, from integrity, sincerity, and candour, and prostitute their own dignity."—*Vitringa.*

d Whitecross.

Heb. Jehovah, the Supreme Judge. **ah,** an interjection expressing both displeasure and concern.[b] **ease me,** by getting rid of them. **enemies,** the unfaithful among the Jews themselves, not foreign foes. (25) **turn,**[c] bring back. He would deal with them in a way of judgment and of purifying. **purely,** *etc.*, lit. *will smelt out as with borax.*[d] **tin,** or lead. (26) **at the first,** *i.e.* the time when judges judged righteously. The times of Dav. and Sol. may be meant. (27) **with judgment,** or Divine severities. **converts,** returning penitent ones.

God purifying His people (*v.* 25).—From these words we are led to consider—I. The work which God will accomplish in all His chosen people. He will cleanse them—1. For His service on earth; 2. For His presence in the better world. Nor are we at any loss to declare—II. The means by which it shall be effected. 1. By the visitations of His providence; 2. By the communications of His grace. Address—(1) Those who are trembling through fear of God's displeasure; (2) Those who are desiring to experience the full work of God's grace upon their souls.[e]

The influence of holiness.—There is an energy of moral suasion in a good man's life, passing the highest efforts of the orator's genius. The seen but silent beauty of holiness speaks more eloquently of God and duty than the tongues of men and angels. Let parents remember this. The best inheritance a parent can bequeath to a child is a virtuous example, a legacy of hallowed remembrances and associations. The beauty of holiness beaming through the life of a loved relative or friend is more effectual to strengthen such as do stand in virtue's ways, and raise up those that are bowed down, than precept, command, entreaty, or warning. Christianity itself, I believe, owes by far the greater part of its moral power, not to the precepts or parables of Christ, but to His own character. The beauty of that holiness which is enshrined in the four brief biographies of the Man of Nazareth has done more and will do more to regenerate the world, and bring in everlasting righteousness, than all the other agencies put together. It has done more to spread His religion in the world than all that has ever been preached or written on the evidences of Christianity.[f]

28—31. (28) **destruction,** lit. *breaking into shivers.*[a] **transgressors,** impenitent and obstinate ones will not be humbled by gracious judgments. **together,** in a mass, at once, and utterly. **consumed,** Ps. xxxvii. 20.[b] (29) **oaks,** or terebinths; prob. trees from wh. figures of idol gods were made. **gardens,** or idol-groves.[c] Peculiarly favourable for the sensual rites connected with idol-worship. (30) **leaf fadeth,** bec. it has no vitality. **no water,** or Divine grace for the renewal of life.[d] (31) **strong,** or the powerful rulers. **maker of it,** better, *and his work.* **spark,**[e] a man's sin lighting up his judgment.

Gardens.—In the language of the Hebrews, every place where plants and trees were cultivated with greater care than in the open field was called a garden. The idea of such an enclosure was certainly borrowed from the garden of Eden, which the bountiful Creator planted for the reception of His favourite creature. The garden of Hesperides, in Eastern fables, was protected by an enormous serpent; and the gardens of Adonis,

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a Is. iii. 1, x. 16, 33, xix. 4.

b "He sighs at being compelled to use this severity."—*Calvin.*

c Take thee in hand; address myself to thy case.

d "The totality of the nation shall be subjected to a purifying process wh. the Prophet compares to the process by which silver ore is freed from the mixture of ignoble metal, and rendered so-ni silver. The separation of the lead ore is promoted by applying alkali."—*Nägelsbach.*

Ro. xi. 26, Re. iii' 19.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 27. *J. Matham,* 39; *J. Randall,* 215.

"Steadfastness is a noble quality, but, unguided by knowledge or humility, it becomes r a s h n e s s."—*Swartz.*

f Dr. Chalmers.

a "The crushing, utter ruin. The terms of this v. are appropriate to all kinds of sin, but seem to be peculiarly descriptive of idolatry, as defection or desertion from the true God to idols."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Ps. civ. 35; Pr. xxix. 1; Re. xxi. 8.

c Is. lxv. 3, lxvi. 17; Eze. vi. 13; Ho. iv. 13.

"Whether they idolised worldly

among the Greeks, may be traced to the same origin; for the terms "*horti Adonides*," the gardens of Adonis, were used by the ancients to signify gardens of pleasure, which corresponds with the name of Paradise. or the garden of Eden, as *horti Adonis* answers to the garden of the Lord. Besides, the gardens of primitive nations were commonly, if not in every instance, devoted to religious purposes. In these shady retreats were celebrated, for a long succession of ages, the rites of pagan superstition. Thus, Jehovah calls the apostate Jews "a people that provoked Me continually to anger to My face, that sacrificeth in gardens." And in a preceding chapter the Prophet threateus them in the name of the Lord: "They shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens which ye have chosen." The inspired writer not only mentions these gardens, but also makes a clear allusion to the tree of life, or rather of knowledge, both of which were placed in the midst of Paradise.*f*—*Moral beauty of shame.*—A young girl was one day censured by her mother for some fault, upon which she deeply blushed. burst into tears, and retired into a corner. Gotthold was present, and observed to the mother: "How beautiful your reproof has made your daughter! That crimson hue, and silver tears, become her better than any ornament of gold and pearls. These may hang on the neck of a wanton, but those are never seen disconnected with moral purity. A full-blown rose, besprinkled with the purest dew. is not so beautiful as this child blushing beneath her parent's displeasure, and shedding tears of sorrow for her fault. A blush is the sign which nature hangs out to show where chastity and honour dwell."*g*

power and grandeur, or trusted in idols, they would be left in helpless disappointment in the day of vengeance." — *Spk. Com.*

d Comp. Je. ii. 13, xvii. 13.

e "Sin is the match which ignites the sinner with the fire of the punishment that will consume him." — *Wordsworth.*

"I know not how to tell thee! Shame rises in my face, and interrupts the story of my tongue!" —*Otway.*

f *Paxton.*

g *Gotthold.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1, 2. (1) word, or message Divinely entrusted to Is. **saw,** prob. in a vision. (2) **last days,**[a] *comp.* Mi. iv. 1, 2. Ref. is to the time of the Christian economy. **mountain .. mountains,** a fig. expression, meaning that the Church should be placed in a conspicuous and attractive position.[b] The mountain is the Church, "the antitypical Zion." **top of,** better, *at the* head of.[c] **flow,** in a procession that may be likened to a river.

The Gospel conspicuous (*v.* 2).—I. The coming glory of the Church. 1. A universal brotherhood; 2. A reign of love; 3. An age of progress. II. Signs of its approach. 1. The accomplishment of prophecy; 2. Dissemination of useful knowledge; 3. The connection of minds by scientific discovery; 4. The extension of evangelical truth.[d]

The spiritual magnet.—There is an Eastern fable about a great mountain of loadstone out in the middle of the sea, that attracted all the ships which came near it, by the iron nails and bolts which fastened their timbers together, and then, drawing these out, left the vessel to strew the waves, a mass of beams and boards and spars. This mountain of the Lord's house is a grand spiritual magnet, and it draws souls, not to destruction, but everlasting life.[e]

3. people, better, peoples, nations. **house,** or temple. **the law,** the true religion, as a rule of duty. **word of Jehovah,** the true religion. as a revelation.[a]

a Je. xxiii. 20, xxx. 23; Da. x. 14; Ho. iii. 5.

b "Instead of saying in modern phraseology, that the Church, as a society, shall become conspicuous and attract all nations, he represents the mountain upon which the temple stood as being raised and fixed above the other mountains, so as to be visible in all directions." — *J. A. Alexander.*

c "Its crest the summit of the whole range." — *Spk. Com.*

d *W. Whythe.*

e *Dr. Edmond.*

a "The Church which was first founded at Jerusalem was the

seminary or seed-plot of all Churches of Christendom. And well might the Prophet say that the law shall go forth from Zion; for the Gospel streamed forth with its living waters from that fountain and well-spring, and irrigated the world."—*S. Jerome.*

Je. l. 5; Zec. viii. 21—23; Lu. xxiv. 47.

e. 3. *Bp. Long, Boyle Lec.* 289; *E. Erskine*, i. 508; *F. Webb*, ii. 155.

b Dr. Stoughton. "All who profess the Gospel and have not sincerity, are as clouds without water, trees without fruit, or lamps without oil; but those who love God with undivided hearts, participate a constant succession of pleasures in His approbation and in their own minds."—*Beaumont.*

a "The Syrian plough is often nothing but the branch of a tree, cut below a bifurcation, and used without wheels. The ploughshare is a piece of iron, broad but not large, which tips the end of the shaft. So much does it resemble the short sword used by the ancient warriors, that it may with very little trouble be converted into that deadly weapon, and when the work of destruction is over, reduced again to its former shape."—*Barnes.*

The mountain of the Lord's house (*vv.* 2—4).—I. The period referred to. The Christian dispensation. II. The cheering truth declared. 1. Elevated position; 2. Permanent duration. III. The general interest awakened. 1. The invitation given: 2. The considerations by which it is enforced. IV. The happy results secured. 1. A consummation devoutly to be wished: 2. Absolutely certain in its realisation; 3. The means whereby it shall be accomplished.

Origin and glory of the Gospel.—As to its origin and glory, the Gospel may be compared to an angel "standing in the sun;" as to the territorial range of its commission, it may be compared to "an angel flying in the midst of heaven;" as to the gracious mysteries of salvation to which it points, it may be compared to the angels looking into the ark of the covenant: as to the pure and holy worship which it enjoins, and over which it presides, it may be compared to the angel standing beside the altar of incense; as to the hopes and inspirations which it warrants and sustains, it may be compared to an angel at heaven's gate, saying to us, poor dusty wayfarers, "Come up hither." But looking at the relations of the Gospel to men in the business of everyday life, we may regard it still as an angel (losing nothing of its ethereal beauty and celestial brightness); but then, it is an angel full of condescension and brotherly companionship; an angel mingling with us, and talking to us—helping, and guiding, and comforting us; an angel, recognising our earthly wants, and sympathising with us in our earthly trials, like the angel who came to Abraham under the trees of Mamre, and to Lot in his house at Sodom; like the angel who appeared to Ornan while he was threshing wheat; like the angel who appeared to Zechariah in the shop of the four carpenters; like the angel who touched Elijah asleep, and showed him a "cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head:" and like the angel who came to Peter in prison, and took off his chains and set him free! Thus does the religion of the Bible come home to us, and put itself on a level with us, entering fully into our temporal circumstances, temporal necessities, temporal duties, and temporal trials.[b]

4. **he shall judge**, the coming Messiah shall administer justice as a king: as a sovereign umpire He shall settle all controversies. **rebuke**, or reprove. **pruning hooks**, or scythes,[a] **learn war**, the arts of war. "Uzziah was famed far and wide for his invention of new weapons of war." 2 Chr. xxvi. 11—15.

An end of war (*v.* 4).—I. A difficult subject. 1. Because of the warlike spirit of the times; 2. Because of the vastness and many sides of the theme itself. II. In the text is named one of the most terrible curses by which mankind is afflicted. III. In the text we have one of the most terrible features of war disclosed; learned, studied, as an art. IV. The text contains also a glorious prophecy of the time when there shall be war no more. Apply:—Let each do what he can to aid in the fulfilment of the text.

Weapons of war.—I have been labouring among a people who once delighted in war; but, since Christianity has prevailed there, war has ceased altogether, and they are astonished how they ever engaged in all those deeds of savage cruelty which, according to their usual practice, threatened the extermination of their race; but now the Prince of Peace reigns there. I have seen the musket-barrel taken from the stock, and carried to the

anvil, and beaten into a spade or a hoe, though not into a plough-share, for the plough does not yet turn up their fruitful soil, and the warrior who has used it in battle now employs it in cultivating the land. They have even gone further in illustration of this beautiful description of the Prophet; for they have devoted the implements of war to the service of the sanctuary. The last Sabbath I was there, I went into one of their chapels, and ministered to a large congregation of about fifteen hundred persons. A rude sort of pulpit was erected, and stairs led up to it, the railings of which, smooth and polished, were literally composed of the handles of warriors' spears, who had thus transferred their weapons, with themselves, to a nobler and better purpose—the service of the sanctuary of God.[b]—*Swords beaten into ploughshares, etc.*—The image in these verses, the first for the prevalence of peace, and the second reversed, for the occurrence and continuance of war, is striking and natural. Heathen poets employ it,—Virg. *Georgic*, i. 506; Ovid, *Fast.* i. 697. In such states of society as that among the Hebrews the peasantry when summoned to the field are obliged to provide their own weapons. When, therefore, they were poor, and material for weapons was too expensive for their resources, it would be an obvious thought to turn the ploughshare, which was thin, long, and light, for such an instrument, into a sword, which was short and thick as compared with our sword. When the war was over, the change might easily be made back again. A sword would, of course, with equal facility be changed into a ploughshare. Pruning-hooks in both the passages quoted may probably intend, not exclusively the long knives used for trimming vines, but anything employed in reaping or mowing, such as a sickle or scythe.

5. **house of Jacob**, *comp.* Ex. xix. 3: the family of Israel, God's chosen people. **light of the Lord**, "the path of duty upon wh. the light of revelation shines."[a]

Exhortation to a holy walk (*v.* 5).—Let us walk in—I. The light of His truth. It now shines with meridian splendour. II. Of His countenance. This is the privilege of the true believer; let us enjoy our privilege. III. Of His commandments. These are given as a light to our feet; let us make them the rule of our conduct. Addressing the house of Jacob—1. Speak to those who are so nominally; 2. Those who are really so.[b]

The satisfaction of holiness.—The knowledge of God and conformity to Him are in their own nature apt to satisfy the desires of the soul, and even now actually do so in the measure wherein they are attained. Some things are not of a satisfying nature; there is nothing tending to satisfaction in them. And then the continual heaping together of such things doth no more towards satisfaction than the accumulating of mathematical points would towards the compacting of a solid body, or the multiplication of cyphers only, to the making of a sum. But the hungry, craving soul, that would fain be happy, but knows not how, needs not spend its days in making uncertain guesses and fruitless attempts and trials; it may fix its hovering thoughts, and upon assurance here given, say, "I have now found at last where satisfaction may be had; and have only this to do, to bend all my powers hither and intend this one thing, the possessing myself of this blessed rest. Happy discovery! welcome tidings!

"It is undeniable that Christianity has greatly contributed to ameliorate the political condition of mankind, by diminishing the horrors of war, promoting mutual intercourse, and advancing the useful arts."—*E. Henderson.*

Ps. lxxii. 7; Je. xxiii. 6; Zec. ix. 10.

v. 4. *Dr. H. Hammond*, iv. 469; *T. Rogers*, ii. 238; *Dr. Channing*, iii. 29; *Dr. T. Chalmers*, xi. 55; *J. Foster*, ii. 142; *F. D. Maurice*, 78.

b W. Ellis.

"A peace is of the nature of a conquest; for then both parties nobly are subdued, and neither party loser."—*Shakespeare.*

a J. A. Alexander.

"I am of opinion that the Prophet, by 'light of Jehovah,' understands that light which Jehovah Himself extends to the people, by the prophetic word that *just precedes.* In the light of that word ought Israel to set its present history."—*Nägelsbach.*

Ps. lxxxix. 15; Is. lx. i. 19; Jno. xii. 35, 36; 1 Jno. i. 7; Re. xxi. 23, 24.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

vv. 4, 5. *Bp. W. Nicholson*, 440.

"Peace has sweets that Hybla never knew; it sleeps on down, cull'd gently from be-

neath the cherub's wing."—*Brooke.*
c J. Howe.

a "The word 'replenished' suggests a reference to the pythons, and other diviners, who were filled with an *afflatus* from an evil spirit."—*Vitringa.*
b Gesenius.
c J. A. Alexander.
d "As if that could be a god to them wh. was not only a creature, but their own creature."—*Matt. Henry.*
e Dr. Lyth.
v. 6. *J. C. Dieterie*, 557.
v. 8. *S. Hardy*, 123.
"This is a true and literal description of India: the traveller cannot proceed a mile through an inhabited country without seeing idols and vestiges of idolatry in every direction. See their vessels, their implements of husbandry, their houses, their furniture, their ornaments, their sacred trees, their domestic and public temples; and they all declare that the land is full of idols."—*Roberts.*
f C. H. Spurgeon.

a Of old Is. fled before an invading army into caves and rocks. Ju. vi. 2; 1 Sa. xiii. 6.

See Re. vi. 15.

b Wordsworth.

c "The terror shall be like that which spreads before an overpowering invasion of the enemy."—*Lange.*

I now know to which way to turn my eye and direct my pursuit. I shall no longer spend myself in dubious toilsome wanderings, in anxious vain inquiry. I have found it! I have found it! blessedness is here."[e]

6—9. (6) **therefore**, or for. Turning to God, the Prophet says, "I thus exhort Thy people, *because* Thou hast forsaken them," etc. **from the east**, regarded as the cradle of the occult arts and sciences. Filled with Oriental luxuries and idolatries.[a] **soothsayers**, sorcerers practising hidden arts. **Philistines**, 1 Sa. vi. 2; 2 Ki. i. 2. **please themselves**, strike hands with: make covenant with:[b] or, abound with,[c] the people of God encouraging the settlement among them of heathen strangers. (7) **horses**, *comp.* De. xvii. 16, 17. (8) **own hands . . made**, the usual prophetic satire of idols.[d] (9) **mean . . great**, all classes combining in the sin of idolatry.

National apostasy (*vv.* 6—8).—We have here—I. A catalogue of Israel's sins. 1. Unhallowed intercourse with God's enemies; 2. Divination; 3. Worldliness: 4. Idolatry. II. A denunciation of Israel's punishment. 1. God forsakes them; 2. Withholds forgiveness.[e]

The sinner's plea.—"A man called at my house some time ago for charity—an arrant beggar, I have no doubt. Thinking that the man's rags and poverty were real, I gave him a little money, some of my clothes, and a pair of shoes. After he had put them on and gone out, I thought, 'Well, after all, I have done you a bad turn very likely, for you will not get so much money now as before, because you will not look so wretched an object.' Happening to go out a quarter of an hour afterwards, I saw my friend; but he was not wearing the clothes I had given him, not he! Why, I should have ruined his business if I could have compelled him to look respectable. He had been wise enough to slip down an archway, take all the good clothes off, and put his rags on again. Did I blame him? Yes, for being a rogue; but not for carrying on his business in a business-like manner. He only wore his proper livery, for rags are the livery of a beggar. The more ragged he looked, the more he would get. Just so is it with you. If you are to go to Christ, do not put on your good doings and feelings, or you will get nothing; go in your sins, they are your livery. Your ruin is your argument for mercy, your poverty is your plea for heavenly alms, and your need is the motive for heavenly goodness."[f]

10, 11. (10) **enter**, *etc.*, bec. the judgment is even now seen approaching.[a] **rock**, wh., in Pal., abounds in caves. **dust**, "as travellers endeavouring to escape the sweeping simoom of the desert."[b] **for fear**, or fr. before the terror of the Lord. **glory . . majesty**, some great manifestation of His power in judgment.[c] (11) **lofty looks**, lit. *eyes of loftiness.* **exalted**, "as a high and safe asylum, an impregnable rock-fortress.

A great day (*vv.* 10—12).—I. A description of the day of the Lord. 1. It is the day of the revelation of the Divine glory; 2. Of the exaltation of the Divine majesty; 3. Of the utter overthrow of human pride; 4. Of the abolition of idolatry and superstition; 5. Of the confusion and destruction of God's foes. II. An exhortation to prepare for it. 1. Enter into the rock: 2. Hide thee in the dust; 3. Cease from man. III. Grounds for the

exhortation. 1. This day will be very terrible and glorious; 2. A place of shelter is provided—a rock, a cleft in the rock; 3. We have the means of securing this shelter—humble thyself in the dust, enter in by faith.[d]

12, 13. (12) day of the Lord, a frequent proph. fig. for a "period of Divine judgment."[a] Comp. N. T. term, "day of judgment." (13) cedars, *etc.*,[b] image of the haughty nobles and princes. "The Heb. exhibited things Divine, spiritual, moral, and political, by a set of images taken from things natural, artificial, religious, historical, in the way of allegory, or metaphor."[c] Bashan, country E. of Jordan, N. of the river Jabbok, famous for fine oaks, pasture, and cattle.

Newton and Marlborough.—It is truly humbling to the pride of man to see to what a state of mental and physical ruin he is brought by the lapse of time. Sir Isaac Newton, that wonderful scholar, of whom it is said, that he "surpassed the whole human race in genius," and who, if any one can be properly styled great and illustrious, is surely entitled to these epithets, when, in his declining years, he was requested to explain some passage in his chief mathematical work, could only, as it is reported, say, that he knew it was true once. A circumstance in some degree similar is related of that celebrated military commander, the first Duke of Marlborough, who flourished about the same period. When the history of his own campaigns was read to him, to beguile the tedious hours in the evening of life, we are told, so far were his intellectual faculties impaired, that he was unconscious of what he had done, and asked in admiration, from time to time, "Who commanded?" Here, then, not to cite more examples, we have fresh proofs that "all the glory of man," even in what he is most especially apt to value himself, is but "as the flower of grass."[d]

14—16. (14) mountains . . hills, symbolising kingdoms: or the fastnesses in wh. the nation trusted rather than in God. (15) high tower, such Uzziah had built for his defence, 2 Chr. xxvi. 9. fenced wall, lit. *cut off*, rendered inaccessible by being fortified. (16) ships of Tarshish, the great merchant-ships,[a] put as the type of the commerce in wh. men placed so great confidence. pleasant pictures, sculptures and fresco-paintings: including all visible objects of admiration and delight.

A corrective of pride.—Libussa, princess of Bohemia, first ennobled, and then married Primaslaus, who before was a plain husbandman. In remembrance of his former condition, he preserved a pair of wooden shoes. Being asked the cause of his doing so, he made the following answer: "I have brought these shoes with me for the purpose of setting them up as a monument in the castle of Visegrade, and of exhibiting them to my successors, that all may know that the first prince of Bohemia was called to his high dignity from the cart and the plough; and that I myself, who am elevated to a crown, may bear constantly in mind that I have nothing whereof to be proud."

17—19. (17) loftiness, *etc.*, as *v.* 11. (18) the idols, wh. in the time of judgment will be proved helpless, and so be forsaken of their worshippers. abolish, or they shall utterly pass away: "flit away, like the phantom of a dream."[a] (19) holes,

d Dr. Lyth.

v. 11. *F. D. Maurice*, 16.

a Eze. iii. 15; Joel i. 15. "More exactly—'For the Lord hath a day.' He has it in reserve, ready to be brought out when the time of forbearance is over."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The most distinguished objects of nature and art are used metaphorically to represent the different persons or orders of men, elevated by the dignity of office, or rendered notable by their riches, or the elegance and luxury of their establishments, whom the judgments of God would, in a more remarkable manner, hurl into ruin."—*E. Henderson.*

c Lowth.

d R. T. S.

a "Richly-laden and far-going vessels, like our term East Indiamen."—*Fausset.*

"Ships delightful to look upon."—*E. Henderson.*

"Such as were built for the Ophir trade at the ports of the Ælanitic gulf."—*Spk. Com.*

"All the noble vessels and instruments of commercial prosperity."—*Wordsworth.*

a "In a verse consisting of three words, their destiny is declared as with

a flash of lightning."—*Delitzsch*

b Am. i. 1. Comp. He. xii. 26.

v. 17. *J. S. Boone*, 359.

v. 18. *R. Hall*, vi. 292.

v. 19. *W. Redding*, iv. 292.

"The first party of painted savages who raised a few huts upon the Thames did not dream of the London they were creating, or know that in lighting the fire on their hearth they were kindling one of the great foci of time. . . All the grand agencies which the progress of mankind evolves are formed in the same unconscious way. They are the aggregate result of countless single wills, each of which, thinking merely of its own end, and perhaps fully gaining it, is at the same time enlisted by Providence in the secret service of the world."—*James Martineau. c Pall Mall Gazette.*

a "A confession that they had buried themselves away in the darkness of earthly desires, and of foul, grovelling superstition."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 20. *J. C. Dieteric*, 562.

"It is always hard to go beyond your public. If they are satisfied with cheap performance, you will not easily arrive at

etc., comp. *v.* 10. **shake terribly**, by His judgments, but with possible allusion to the earthquake in Uzziah's reign.[b]

The triumphs of the Gospel (*v.* 18).—I. The condition implied. Idolatry: define this—carved objects of worship, supreme affections set on other than God, the idols of the heart. II. The glorious change predicted. 1. The conversion of their adherents to a purer faith; 2. The extent to which this change shall be effected. III. The means appointed for its accomplishment. 1. Earnest prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; 2. The preaching of the Gospel. IV. The encouragement. 1. The faithfulness of God's word; 2. The success already granted: 3. The condescension of God in owning and blessing the feeble efforts made for His glory.

An unfortunate idol.—There are few positions more melancholy than that of an Indian god who has seen better days, and it is difficult to read the accounts in the Indian papers of the present condition of Jagarnath without a deep feeling of commiseration for that unfortunate deity. Jagarnath, according to the *Pioneer*, has been in a bad way since his hereditary protector, the Rajah of Puri, has gone to live in the Andamans. The affairs of the temple have been found to be in a pitiable state, the Rajah having greatly mismanaged the revenue. His mother, the Rani, has done all that her ingenuity could suggest to mend matters, but there are serious arrears in the pay and perquisites of the servants of the temple and family dependents, to pay up which would take a large revenue. Since the conviction of the Dibya Singh Deb the pension to the family has been stopped, and the local feeling is that the Rani is harshly treated by having the sins of her son visited on her own head. A further calamity in the shape of a famine has long been hanging over Puri, and the car festival was a miserable affair. At first no timber for the great car could be got, as the usual agent blankly refused to send an inch of wood, and it seemed as if Jagarnath would have to dispense with his customary airing. The Rani, however, was indefatigable, and in spite of difficulties managed to do the work of her worthless son. It is worth consideration whether Jagarnath, instead of being sent for an airing in a car, might not with advantage be treated occasionally with a railway journey, accompanied by his devotees, who would perhaps find in a collision a pleasing excitement equivalent to that produced by throwing themselves under the wheels of his car.[c]

20, 21. (20) **cast his idols**, as indic. in *v.* 18. **to the moles**, *etc.*, specially noted as the creatures of the darkness: the one burrowing in the dark ground, the other flying in the dark sky. The expression is a proverbial one for "contemptuous rejection." The helplessness of idols being found out, men would throw them away into the darkness.[a] (21) **to go**, unencumbered, seeking a safety for themselves wh. their idols fail to give. **tops**, crevices; fissures of the cliffs.

The bat.—The bat is a winged quadruped, the link which connects the four-footed animal and the bird. It is a most deformed and hideous creature, which uniformly endeavours to shun the light of day, as if conscious of its disgusting aspect, and fixes its abode in the horrid cavern, or the ruined habitation. The great, or Ternat bat, belongs to the East, and was not altogether unknown to the ancients. It is noted for its cruelty, voracity, and

filthiness. It is more mischievous than any other species of bat; but it carries on the work of destruction by open force, both during the night and day. It kills poultry and small birds: attacks men, and often wounds them in the face. "This unsightly animal," says Forbes, "fixes its dwelling among owls and noxious reptiles in the desolate tower, or lonely, unfrequented mausoleum, which it seldom or never leaves, except in the dusk of evening. In the East, where they grow to an enormous size, their stench is so intolerable that it is impossible to remain many seconds to examine the place. Into the vault or trench of the mole, and those dismal abodes frequented by the Ternat bats, which man can scarcely endure to visit, the idolater, terrified by the destructive judgments of a just and righteous God, shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which he made for himself to worship: regardless of their intrinsic value, ashamed of the trust he reposed in them, and distracted by the terrors of the Almighty, he shall cast them in desperation and scorn out of his sight, that, freed from the useless encumbrance, he may escape for his life. 'In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles, and to the bats.' Instead of building magnificent temples for their reception, where nothing to offend the senses is permitted to enter; instead of watching over them with scrupulous care, devoting their days, their riches, and all they possess, to their service, instead of adoring them with insensate prostrations and offerings, they shall cast them to creatures so vile or dangerous, into places so dismal and loathsome, as to preclude the possibility of returning to their idolatrous practices. Or to cast their idols to the moles and the bats, may signify the utter destruction of these objects of worship. When the Greeks said, *Ball' es korakas*, Cast him to the ravens, the meaning was, cast him to destruction: and this prophecy may refer to a proverbial expression among the Jews of similar import."[b]

22. **cease . . man**, *i.e.* cease to trust in him, see Ps. cxlvi. 3, 4. "An appropriate exhortation arising out of the predicted destruction of all human glory." **breath . . nostrils**, the quick passing breath being a symbol of his fleeting life. Man regarded as helper, saviour, defender, is of little worth. Our trust must be wholly in God. **accounted of**, or valued. "In what way can he be reckoned as having intrinsic worth?"[a]

Trust not in man (*v.* 22).—I. Man may be endowed with rich and varied talents and distinctions. Illustrations. II. All men are fragile and mortal. 1. This agrees with the account of his creation; 2. Is philosophically true; 3. It exhibits the uncertainty of life; 4. In old age breathing is weak; 5. At death it ceases; 6. This is the condition of all men. III. The wise and reasonable conclusion of the text. 1. We ought to recognise talent and greatness, should honour it, greatly value it, when removed mourn its loss; 2. But should not trust in man, for the wisest man may err, the best may do wrong, all men will die; 3. If we cease from man we shall avoid man, idolatry, make God our hope, adhere to principles which are immortal; Jesus stands in contrast to all others.[b]

Trust not in man.—The celebrated statesman, William Pitt, died at a solitary house on Wimbledon Common. Not far off, by the roadside, stood a small country inn, where the various parties

better. If they know what is good, and require it, you will aspire and burn till you achieve it. But from time to time, in history, men are born a whole age too soon."—*Emerson.*

"Mankind never loses any good thing, physical, intellectual, or moral, till he finds a better, and then the loss is a gain. No step backward is the rule of human history. What is gained by one man is invested in all men, and is a permanent investment for all time."—*Theodore Parker.*

b Paxton.

a Job vii. 17, 18; Ps. viii. 4, cxviii. 8, 9, cxliv. 3, 4, cxlvi. 3, 4.

b Dr. Burns.

v. 22. *R. Morehead*, ii. 315; *J. Slade*, iii. 1; *F. Close*, ii. 151; *Dr. W. Whewell*, 135; *Lord A. Hervey*, i. 1.

Modern discoveries have shown that the seeds of epidemic and miasmatic diseases are generated and exert their activity during the night, and in places unvisited by the sun's beams,—a true picture of the cause of mental and moral ignorance

The winter at Jokin is severe, and fuel scarce. Large coal-beds exist in the vicinity; but the Chinese do not dare to work them underground, for fear of destroying the equilibrium of the earth, and turning the Celestial Empire upside down.

c Whitecross.

interested in the great statesman's life were accustomed to apply for information, and leave their horses and carriages. On the morning of the 23rd of January, 1806, an individual having called at the inn, and not being able to obtain a satisfactory reply to his inquiries, proceeded to the house of Pitt. He knocked, but no servant appeared; he opened the door and entered, but found no one in attendance; he proceeded from room to room, and at length entered the sick chamber, where, on a bed, in silence, and in perfect solitude, he found, to his unspeakable surprise, the dead body of that great statesman who had so lately wielded the power of England, and influenced, if he did not control, the destinies of the world. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"[c]

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—3. (1) **Lord . . hosts**, as ch. i. 24. **stay . . staff**, *lit.* the male and female support, put for every kind of support.[a] **bread . . water**, the natural and necessary means of subsistence. This would be accomplished either by famine or by invasion and blockade. (2) **prudent**, or the diviner; perhaps the wise far-seeing man. **ancient**, or elder. (3) **honourable man**, or man of high rank. **eloquent orator**, or man of skilful speech.[b]

National calamity (*vv.* 1—8).—Here are—I. Some forms of national calamity. 1. Famine; 2. Removal of men prominent in influence; 3. An upstart and inefficient Government; 4. Mutual oppression; 5. General insubordination; 6. No healer of the sick State; 7. Utter ruin. II. The causes which occasion them. 1. Ungodliness in speech; 2. In act; 3. In spite of light and knowledge.[c]

4, 5. (4) **children . . babes**,[a] the last term used forcibly expresses the petulance of boys in the exercise of assumed authority. Men as little under self-control as spoilt children.[b] (5) **be oppressed**, by oppressing one another; each class being against the other classes: one of the most painful signs of social anarchy and bad government. **child**, forgetting even the respect due to age. **base**, those of lower rank.[c]

Influence of government on the character of a people.—Men are valiant and industrious when they fight for themselves and their country. They prove excellent in all the arts of war and peace when they are bred up in virtuous exercises, and taught by their fathers and masters to rejoice in the honours gained by them. They love their country when the good of every particular man is comprehended in the public prosperity, and the success of their achievements is improved to the general advantage. They undertake hazards and labour for the government, when it is justly administered; when innocence is safe, and virtue honoured; when no man is distinguished from the vulgar, but such as have distinguished themselves by the bravery of their actions: when no honour is thought too great for those who do it eminently, unless it be such as cannot be communicated to others of equal merit. They do not spare their persons, purses, or friends, when the public powers are employed for the public benefit, and imprint the like affections in their children from their infancy.

a Le. xxvi. 26.

b "The entire apparatus of State machinery of that day is mentioned."—*Vägelsbach.*

"A sublime idea remains the same, from whatever brain, or in whatever region, it had its birth."—*Menzel.*

c Dr. Lyth.

a Ecc. x. 16.

b Illustrated by Jehoiachim, 2 Chr. xxxvi. 9.

"Some apply this in a strict sense to the weak and wicked reign of Ahaz; others, in a wider sense, to the series of weak kings after Isaiah. But the most probable opinion is that the incompetent rulers are called boys or children not in respect to age, but character." — *J. A. Alexander.*

c "When weak hands hold the reigns of government a condition of lawlessness ensues, and of defencelessness for

The discipline of obedience, in which the Romans were bred, taught them to command; and few were admitted to the magistracies of inferior rank till they had given such proofs of their virtue as might deserve the supreme. Cincinnatus, Camillus, Papirius, Fabius Maximus, were not made dictators that they might learn the duties of the office, but because they were judged to be of such wisdom, valour, integrity, and experience, that they might be safely trusted with the highest powers; and, whilst the law reigned, not one was advanced to that honour who did not fully answer what was expected from him. By these means the city was so replenished with men fit for the greatest employments, that even in its infancy, when three hundred and six of the Fabii were killed in one day, the city did lament the loss, but was not so weakened as to give any advantage to their enemies: and when every one of those who had been eminent before the second Punic war—Fabius Maximus only excepted—had perished in it, others arose in their places who surpassed them in number and were equal to them in virtue. The city was a perpetual spring of such men as long as liberty lasted; but that was no sooner overthrown, than virtue was torn up by the roots; the people became base and sordid; the small remains of the nobility slothful and effeminate, and, their Italian associates becoming like to them, the empire, whilst it stood, was only sustained by the strength of foreigners. The Grecian virtue had the same fate, and expired with liberty. . . . It is absurd to impute this to the change of the times; for time changes nothing, and nothing was changed in those times but the government, and that changed all things. This is not accidental, but according to the rules given to nature by God, imposing upon all things a necessity of perpetually following their causes. Fruits are always of the same nature with the seeds and roots from which they come, and trees are known by the fruits they bear. As a man begets a man, and a beast a beast, that society of men which constitutes a government upon the foundation of justice, virtue, and the common good, will always have men to promote those ends; and that which intends the advancement of one man's desires and vanity will abound in those that will foment them.[d]

6—8. (6) **a man**, *etc.*, *i.e.* one in a distressed condition can find no one willing to hold office: the government "goes a-begging."[a] **clothing**, the word means the robe, and stands for an ample wardrobe, sufficient to give some dignity to his office. On so utterly unworthy a ground he is invited to accept of office.[b] **ruin**, of the State affairs. **hand**, or control. (7) **not be a healer**, or binder up. Even he will decline the responsibility.[c] **neither**, *etc.*, *i.e.* to suffice for a ruined nation. (8) **tongue . . Lord**, their words and deeds put for their whole conduct. **provoke**, *etc.*, or defy Him to His face. "The eyes are the organ of the manifestation of His glory."

Royal kindness.—A gentleman, after taking tea with a friend who lived in St. James's Palace, took his leave, and stepping back, immediately fell down a whole flight of stairs, and with his head broke open a closet door. The unlucky visitor was completely stunned with the fall; and on his recovery, found himself sitting on the floor of a small room, and most kindly attended by a neat little old gentleman, who was carefully washing his head

the weak. The strong then do as they wish. They exercise club law." — *Nägelsbach.*

"There is no slight danger from general ignorance; and the only choice which Providence has graciously left to a vicious Government, is either to fall by the people, if they are suffered to become enlightened, or with them, if they are kept enslaved and ignorant."—*Coleridge.*

"It is impossible to make people understand their ignorance, for it requires knowledge to perceive it; and, therefore, he that can perceive it hath it not."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

d A. Sidney.

a M. Henry.

b They would make a ruler or a judge any man with a decent coat on his back.

c "The state of affairs was so ruinous and calamitous that he would not attempt to restore them—as if in the body disease should have so far progressed that he would not undertake to restore the person, and have him *die* under his hands, so as

to expose himself to the reproach of being an unsuccessful and unskilful physician."—*Barnes.*

r. 8. *T. Newlin*, 122.

d Percy Anec.

with a towel, and fitting with great exactness pieces of sticking-plaster to the variegated cuts which the accident had occasioned, For some time his surprise kept him silent; but finding that the kind physician had completed his task, and had even picked up his wig, and replaced it on his head, he rose from the floor, and limping towards his benefactor, was going to utter a profusion of thanks for the attention he had received. These were, however, instantly checked by an intelligent frown, and significant motion of the hand towards the door. The patient understood the hint, but did not then know that for the kind assistance he had received, he was indebted to George II., king of England.[d]

a "An unblushing recklessness of character is indicated."—*E. Henderson.*

Is. lix. 12; Ho. v. 5, vii. 10.

b G. Brooks.

9—11. (9) shew, *etc.*, brazen daring; bold, staring effrontery; impudence. Their wilful badness they make no effort to conceal.[a] as Sodom, *see* Ge. xiii. 13, xviii. 20, 21, xix. 13. rewarded, better, awarded. (10) say ye to, or declare ye of. that . . well, it is well, however appearances may be against him. (11) reward, or retribution. Punishment on wrong-doing must certainly come.

The righteous and the wicked (*v.* 10).—I. A difference of character. 1. Radical; 2. Visible; 3. Important. II. A corresponding difference of state—"well," "ill." 1. During life; 2. At the hour of death; 3. On the day of judgment; 4. Throughout eternity. The connection between the difference of character and the difference of state; the one follows the other—(1) By way of natural consequence; (2) By way of Divine appointment.[b]

"When men refuse to hear the Gospel from the lips of a gracious but uneducated preacher, they remind us of the Spaniard in South America, who suffered severely from the gout, but refused to be cured by an Indian. 'I know,' said he, 'that he is a famous man, and would certainly cure me, but he is an Indian, and would expect to be treated with attentions which I cannot pay to a man of colour, and therefore I prefer remaining as I am."—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

a Percy Anec.

12, 13. (12) children, as *v.* 4. women, either their rulers are as unfit as women; or these rulers are under the government of their seraglios. lead, *lit.* call thee blessed, or flatter thee with promises of safety while you live in self-will and sin. destroy, swallow up. (13) standeth up, the sign of earnestness.

Seeing an emperor.—The Emperor Alexander, in proceeding from Sedan to Paris, travelled in a *berline de voyage*. A young peasant, who had mistaken his carriage for that of his suite, climbed up behind, at some leagues from the city. The august traveller ordered his carriage to stop, and asked his travelling companion why he mounted behind. "Sir," said he, "I wish to go to Sedan to see the Emperor Alexander." "And why do you wish to see the emperor?" "Because," said he, "my parents have told me that he loves Frenchmen: I wish, therefore, to see him for once." "Very well, my good fellow," said Alexander, "you now see him; I am the emperor." The child, in confusion and terror, began to cry: and, after stammering out an excuse, was preparing to descend to pursue his journey on foot. The emperor desired him to remain, saying, "We shall go together." When they arrived at the city, the emperor requested him to call at his hotel. The youth did so. The emperor asked if he wished to go to Russia? "With pleasure," replied the boy. "Well," said he, "since Providence has given you to me, I shall take care of your fortune." The youth went away, on the following day, in the suite of the emperor. A nearly similar adventure occurred to Bonaparte when passing through Eisnach, on his return from Moscow.[a]

a "The most natural interpreta-

14, 15. (14) ancients, or elders. eaten up, as devouring beasts; not tended and watched, as faithful husbandmen. (15)

beat, or crush, as in a mortar. **grind,**[a] as in a mill. Fig. for violent and oppressive exactions.

Servilia.—Among the numerous victims of the tyranny of Nero, was one Bareas Soranus, a man, as Tacitus informs us, of singular vigilance and justice in the discharge of his duty. During his confinement his daughter Servilia was apprehended, and brought into the senate to be arraigned. The crime laid to her charge was, that she had turned into money all her ornaments and jewels, and the most valuable part of her dress, to defray the expense of consulting magicians. To this the young Servilia, with a flood of tears, replied, "That she had indeed consulted magicians, but the whole of her inquiry was to know whether the emperor and senate would afford protection and safety to her dear and indulgent parent against his accusers. "With this view," continued she, "I presented the diviners, men till now utterly unknown to me, with my jewels, my apparel, and other ornaments peculiar to my quality, as I would have presented my blood and life, could they have procured my father's liberty. But whatever this my proceeding was, my unfortunate father was an utter stranger to it; and if it is a crime, I alone am guilty." This pathetic appeal was lost on the sanguinary monster; and Servilia and her father were condemned to die.[b]

16–18. (16) **daughters of Zion,** term used only in Is. iii. 17, iv. 4; Song Sol. iii. 11: the women of Jerus., more esp. those those connected with the leading men.[a] **haughty,** as ch. ii. 11, 15, 17. **necks,** stretched out with the proud uplifting of the head.[b] **wanton eyes,** either, winking with the eyes; or more prob. *koholing the eyes;* referring to the painting of eyelids.[c] **mincing,** or tripping, so as to call attention to themselves. **tinkling,** with their ankle-rings.[d] (17) **scab,** bring disgrace in form of offensive diseases. **discover,** lay bare, depriving them of their gay clothing and ornaments. (18) **tinkling ornaments,** or anklets. **cauls,** or head-bands: braided tresses of hair, with little bells attached. **round tires,** ornaments for the neck.[e]

Fashions (*vv.* 16—26).—Here is—I. A satire upon the fashions of the day—things useless, ridiculous, all costly, all condemned. II. An exposure of the secret principles of fashions—pride, wantonness, vanity. III. A denunciation of God's wrath against fashion. IV. An application of all this to certain daughters of Zion.[f]

Anklets, etc.—The "tinkling ornaments about their feet" are supposed to be anklets, which are thus described by Mr. Lane in his *Modern Egyptians:* "Anklets of gold or silver are worn by some ladies, but are more uncommon than they formerly were. They are of course very heavy, and, knocking together as the wearer walks, make a ringing noise; hence it is said in a song, 'The ringing of thy anklets has deprived me of reason.'" Mr. Roberts, in his *Oriental Illustrations,* has the following remarks in reference to this subject: "We have in this passage (Isa. iii. 16—24) an accurate description of the ornaments and manners of a Hindoo dancing girl. 'Walk with stretched-forth necks;' when the females dance, they stretch forth their necks and hold them awry as if their heads were about to fall off their shoulders. 'And wanton eyes' (the margin, 'deceiving with their eyes'); as the votaries glide along, they roll their eyes (which are painted), and cast wanton glances on those around. 'Walking and mincing' (margin, 'tripping away'); some parts of the dance consist of a tion is that which applies it to the act of grinding the face upon the ground by trampling on the body."—*J. A. Alexander.* Ps. xii. 5; Is. v. 7. "Ah! my lord do not thus crush my face. Alas! alas! my nose and other features will soon be rubbed away. Is my face to be made quite flat with grinding? My heart is squeezed; my heart is squeezed. That head man has been grinding the faces of all his people"—*Roberts.*

b Percy Anec.

a "The worldliness of the people was reflected in the luxury of the females, and the costly variety of their robes and ornaments."—*Spk. Com.*

"The following eight *vv.* contain the most complete description of Oriental female attire to be met with in any ancient writing."—*E. Henderson.*

Comp. 1 Pr. iii. 3, 4.

b Ps. lxxv. 5.

c "Falsely setting off the eyes with paint."—*Lowth.*

d "Metallic rings or bands worn round the ankles. Still used in Syria, Egypt, and India. The noise they made is regarded as at variance with the modest retiring character of the sex.

e "The women of Samaria wear now a head-dress which perfectly illustrates the Proph. descrip-

tion. It is a sort of bonnet with a horseshoe shape in front, and in the front are some silver coins lapping over one another, and making a crescent-shaped tire (resembling the crescent moon) round the forehead and down to the ears."—*Bib. Things.*

f *Dr. Lyth.*

a "Fluttering veils."—*Gesenius.*

b "Gems or metal plates with an inscription on them, wh. were worn as a protection as well as an ornament."—*Delitzsch.*

c "It is the custom in almost all the East for the women to wear rings in their noses, in the left nostril, which is bored low down in the middle. These rings are of gold, and have commonly two pearls and one ruby between, placed in the ring."—*Chardin.*

Ge. xxiv. 22.

d Ru. iii. 15.

"The one thing which a maiden most easily forgets is how she looks—hence mirrors were invented."—*Jean Paul.*

"Pride blasted Eden, and the world has bowed beneath her sceptre, which to break in dust the God incarnate every meekness wore."—*Robert Montgomery.*

"What would you think of a man who paints and decorates his dwelling with all that is beautiful,

tripping or mincing step, which they call *tatte tatte;* the left foot is put first, and the inside of the right keeps following the heel of the former. 'Making a tinkling with their feet:' this sound is made with the ornaments which are worn round their ankles: the first is a large silver curb, like that which is attached to a bridle; the second is of the same kind, but surrounded by a great number of small bells; the third resembles a bracelet; and the fourth is a convex hoop, about two inches deep."

The Grecian bend.—

Let's have the old bend, and not have the new—
Let's have the bend that our grandmother knew,
Over the wash-tub and over the churn:
That is the bend that their daughters should learn.

19—23. (19) **chains,** prob. ear-drops, or pendants from the neck. **mufflers,** or veils ornamented with spangles.[a] (20) **bonnets,** ornamental head-dresses. **of the legs,** or stepping-chains, arranged to make the lady take short and mincing steps. **headbands,** better, girdles. **tablets,** houses of breath, *i.e.* scent, or smelling-bottles worn in the girdle. **earrings,** better, amulets, or charms.[b] **rings,** *i.e.* finger-rings. **nose jewels,** or rings.[c] (22) **suits,** *i.e.* grand festal robes in great variety. Gala-dresses. **mantles,** or sleeve-frocks, worn over the inner tunic. **wimples,** or wrappers,[d] shawls. **crisping pins,** or purses (2 Ki. v. 23). (23) **glasses,** hand-mirrors; polished metal plates. **linen,** of the inner tunics. **hoods,** or turbans. **vails,** or gauze mantles.

Anklets.—Besides ornamental rings in the nose and the ears, they wore others round the legs, which made a tinkling as they went. This custom has also descended to the present times; for Rauwolf met with a number of Arabian women on the Euphrates, whose ankles and wrists were adorned with rings, sometimes a good many together, which, moving up and down as they walked, made a great noise. Chardin attests the existence of the same custom in Persia, in Arabia, and in very hot countries, where they commonly go without stockings, but ascribes the tinkling sound to little bells fastened to those rings. In the East Indies, golden bells adorned the feet and ankles of the ladies from the earliest times; they placed them in the flowing tresses of their hair; they suspended them round their necks; and to the golden rings which they wore on their fingers, to announce their superior rank, and exact the homage which they had a right to expect from the lower orders; and from the banks of the Indus, it is probable the custom was introduced into the other countries of Asia. The Arabian females in Palestine and Syria delight in the same ornaments, and, according to the statements of Dr. Clarke, seem to claim the honour of leading the fashion. "Their bodies are covered with a long blue shift; upon their heads they wear two handkerchiefs; one as a hood, and the other bound over it, as a fillet across the temples. Just above the right nostril, they place a small button, sometimes studded with pearl, a piece of glass, or any other glittering substance; this is fastened by a plug, thrust through the cartilage of the nose. Sometimes they have the cartilaginous separation between the nostrils bored for a ring, as large as those ordinarily used in Europe for hanging curtains; and this pendant in the upper lip covers the mouth; so that, in order to eat, it is necessary to raise it. Their faces,

hands, and arms are tattooed, and covered with hideous scars; their eyelashes and eyes being always painted, or rather dirtied, with some dingy-black or blue powder. Their lips are dyed of a deep and dusky blue, as if they had been eating blackberries. Their teeth are jet black: their nails and fingers brick red; their wrists, as well as their ankles, are laden with large metal cinctures, studded with sharp pyramidical knobs and bits of glass. Very ponderous rings are also placed in their ears."[e]

24—26. (24) **stink**, "not merely would the articles of finery be removed, but everything that was coarse, vulgar, and disgusting was to supply their place."[a] **a rent**, or a mere rope,[b] emblem of poverty and distress. **baldness**, through skin disease fostered by dirt. **stomacher**, or full flowing mantle. **sackcloth**,[c] covering of the very poor, and of mourners. **burning**, as of festering disease.[d] (25) **thy mighty**, lit. *thy might*,[e] *i.e.* thy male population. (26) **lament**, *etc.*, as those who wail for the dead.[f]

Perfumes for the person.—"Sweet smell." No one ever enters a company without being well perfumed; and in addition to various scents and oils, they are adorned with numerous garlands, made of the most odoriferous flowers. "A girdle." Probably that which goes round the waist, which serves to keep the garments from falling, while the girls are dancing. It is sometimes made of silver. "Well-set hair." No ladies pay more attention to the dressing of the hair than do these; for as they never wear caps, they take great delight in this their natural ornament. "Baldness" in a woman makes her most contemptible; and formerly, to shave their head was a most degrading punishment. "Stomacher." I once saw a dress beautifully plaited and stiffened for the front, but I do not think it common. Here, then, we have a strong proof of the accurate observations of Isaiah in reference to the Jewish ladies; he had seen their motions, and enumerated their ornaments; and here we have a most melancholy picture of the fallen state of "the daughters of Zion."[g] The persons of the Assyrian ladies are elegantly clothed and scented with the richest oils and perfumes; and it appears from the sacred Scriptures that the Jewish females did not yield to them in the elegance of their dress, the beauty of their ornaments, and the fragance of their essences. So pleasing to the Redeemer is the exercise of Divine grace in the heart and conduct of a true believer: "How much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon." When a queen was to be chosen by the king of Persia instead of Vashti, the virgins collected at Susana, the capital, underwent a purification of twelve months' duration, to wit, "six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours." The general use of such precious oils and fragrant perfumes among the ancient Romans, particularly among ladies of rank and fashion, may be inferred from these words of Virgil:

"Ambrosiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
Spiravere: pedes vestis fluxit ad imos" (*Æn.* lib. i. l. 403).

"From her head the ambrosial locks breathed the divine fragrance; her robe hung waving down to the ground." In the remote age of Homer, the Greeks had already learnt the lavish

and starves himself, his wife, and his children? Do all you will in adorning the body, you are but adorning dust."—*T. Jones.*

e Paxton.

a E. Henderson.

b "With which they will be tied together, and led as slaves and captives in a string."—*Wordsworth.*

c 2 *Sa.* iii. 31.

d "Or perhaps a sunburnt countenance, owing to their hoods and veils being stripped off whilst they had to work as captives under a scorching sun."—*Faussel.*

e Military force, used collectively for mighty warriors.

f "On Roman medals, struck by order of Titus, in commemoration of his conquest of Jerusalem, and the entire destruction of the Jewish polity, Judæa actually appears in the posture of a female, sitting on the ground, under a palm tree, and giving way to inconsolable grief."—*E. Henderson.*

g Roberts.

It is stated that nothing has been observed in ancient times which could be called glass. In Pompeii, a dozen miles south of Naples, which was covered with ashes by Vesuvius, eighteen hundred years ago, they broke into a room full of glass. There

was ground glass, window glass, cut glass and coloured glass of every description, and the house was evidently a glass maker's factory.

Perfume.—"The air with incense richer than the phœnix' funeral pile."—*T. Nabbs.* "My chamber like the phœnix' nest."—*Behn.* "Perfumed, as if Arabian winds scattered their spices loosely on the face of some rich earth fruitful with aromates."—*Nabbs.* "Yield a more precious breath than that which moves the whispering leaves in the Panchaian groves."—*Habington.*

"Remember, if thou marry for beauty, thou bindest thyself all thy life for that which perchance will neither last nor please thee one year; and when thou hast it, it will be to thee of no price at all."—*Raleigh.*

[b] *Paxton.*

use of such perfumes; for, in describing Juno's dress, he represents her pouring ambrosia and other perfumes all over her body. Hence to an Eastern lady, no punishment could be more severe, none more mortifying to her delicacy, than a diseased and loathsome habit of body, instead of a beautiful skin, softened and made agreeable with all that art could devise, and all that nature, so prodigal in those countries of rich perfumes, could supply. Such was the punishment which God threatened to send upon the haughty daughters of Zion, in the days of Isaiah: "And it shall come to pass, that instead of perfume there shall be ill-savour; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; and a sunburnt skin instead of beauty." The description which Pietro della Valle gives of his own wife, an Assyrian lady, born in Mesopotamia, and educated at Bagdad, whom he married in that country, will enable the reader to form a pretty distinct idea of the appearance and ornaments of an Oriental lady in full dress. "Her eyelashes, which are long, and according to the custom of the East, dressed with stibulum (as we often read in the Holy Scriptures of the Hebrew women of old, and in Xenophon of Astyages, the grandfather of Cyrus, and the Medes of that line), give a dark, and, at the same time, a majestic shade to the eyes. The ornaments of gold and of jewels for the head, for the neck, for the arms, for the legs, and for the feet (for they wear rings even on their toes), are, indeed, unlike those of the Turks, carried to great excess, but not of great value: for in Bagdad, jewels of high price either are not to be had, or are not used; and they wear such only as are of little value, as turquoises, small rubies, emeralds, carbuncles, garnets, pearls, and the like. My spouse dresses herself with all of them, according to their fashion; with exception, however, of certain ugly rings, of very large size, set with jewels, which, in truth very absurdly, it is the custom to wear fastened to one of their nostrils, like buffaloes; an ancient custom, however, in the East, which, as we find in the Holy Scriptures, prevailed among the Hebrew ladies, even in the time of Solomon. These nose-rings, in compliance to me, she has left off; but I have not yet been able to prevail with her cousin, and her sisters, to do the same; so fond are they of an old custom, be it ever so absurd, who have been long habituated to it."[b]

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

[a] "The paucity of males in the community, resulting from this general slaughter, is now expressed by a lively figure representing seven women as earnestly soliciting one man in marriage, and that on the most disadvantageous

1. **one man**, bec. by the destruction of the male population in war, so many women would be left unprotected.[a] **called . . name**, it was customary for the wife to be named after the husband.[b] **reproach**, of having no males belonging to us, and protecting us.

Rage of battle.—

Still pressing forward to the fight, they broke
Through flames of sulphur and a night of smoke,
Till slaughter'd legions fill'd the trench below,
And bore their fierce avengers to the foe.
High on the works the mingling hosts engage,
The battle kindled into tenfold rage,

With showers of bullets, and with storms of fire,
Bombs in full fury, heaps on heaps expire;
Nations, with nations mix'd, confus'dly die,
And lost in one promiscuous carnage lie.
The western sun now shot a feeble ray,
And faintly scatter'd the remains of day,
Ev'ning approach'd: but oh! what hosts of foes
Were never to behold that ev'ning close!
Thick'ning their ranks, and wedged in firm array,
The close-compacted Britons win their way;
In vain the cannon their throng'd war defaced,
With tracks of death, and laid the battle waste.[e]

terms, renouncing the support to which they were by law entitled."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Ge. xii. 17, xlvi. 19; 2 Sa. xi. 3.

See *J. Alting, Op.* ii. par. iv. 1.

v. 1. *Origen*, iii. 110.

c Addison.

2–4. (2) **branch**, *etc.*,[a] reference is to the time of Messiah, *after* the judgment wh. Is. had been threatening. **fruits of the earth**, taken with the prev. fig., this may mean Christ's humanity, as that does His Divinity. **escaped of Israel**, the elect remnant, the faithful few. (3) **left**, the same as the "escaped." Those whom God would acknowledge as His people. **holy**, so "realising Israel's original vocation."[b] **written**, *etc.*, "registered as heirs of eternal life."[c] (4) **washed away**, by His judgments and captivities. **spirit of burning**, regarded as having both a destroying and purifying influence.[d]

a Je. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15; Zec. iii. 8, vi. 12.

b Ex. xix. 6; De. xxviii. 9. Comp. Ac. ix. 13.

c Phil. iv. 3; Re. iii. 5, xvii. 8.

d "In the burning fire of God's judgments there is a Spirit of love, which, while it scorches, purifies." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 3. *H. Zanchius*, vii. 174.

The branch of the Lord (*vv.* 1–6).—We have—I. A special period implied. II. An attractive object presented. III. An encouraging fact announced. IV. An important process declared. V. A state of blessedness promised. God is set forth in connection with His people—1. As their guide; 2. As their guard.

Emblem of God's government.—Visiting a friend one day, Gotthold found him seated with his family at table, and observed that the children all received a due portion of food, and were required to eat it in a quiet and orderly way; but that beside the father's plate there was also lying upon the table a rod, to warn them against improprieties of conduct and manners. He thereupon observed to his friend, "You treat your children as our heavenly Father treats His. He, too, prepares a table before them, and gives them all sorts of good things, spiritual and temporal, to enjoy; and yet the rod, which is another name for the cross, must likewise be at hand, that we may not become froward, but walk in holy fear and filial obedience. Of this truth God has given us an almost similar emblem in the sacred Scriptures. For the ark of the Old Testament contained not only the golden pot with the manna, but also Aaron's rod, which blossomed, to intimate the authority He exercises over His family, and teach us that, although He feeds the members with the hidden manna of His sweet grace, He also purposes to use the rod if He shall see cause."[e]

The Gospel often pierces before it heals; just as the lancing of a wound goes before its cure.

e Gotthold.

5, 6. (5) **cloud and smoke**, recalling the pillar of cloud and fire over Israel, and assuring of the Divine protection and guidance. **defence**, or canopy of Div. protection. Prop. the canopy of the nuptial couch. (6) **tabernacle**,[a] or gracious shelter provided.

Substantial shadow amid the unsubstantial (*v.* 6).—I. This tabernacle is a cooling shadow. II. This tabernacle is a life-

a "The 'Branch of the Lord' is Himself the restored 'Tabernacle of David.'" —*Spk. Com.*

b W. Burrows, B.A.

v. 5. *T. Halyburton*, 615; *N. J. Owen*, 609; *Dr. J. Owen*, xvi. 5; *Dr. H. Draper*, i. 209; *J. Summerfield*, 214.

b *T. Jones.*

giving and preserving shadow. III. This tabernacle is a delightful shadow. IV. This tabernacle is an abiding shadow.[b]

Divine shelter.—Somewhere in the East there is a tree which is a non-conductor of electricity. The people know it, and when a storm comes, they flee towards it for safety. Beautiful picture of the Saviour! Beautiful emblem of the tree of Calvary! It is a non-conductor of wrath. Get underneath it, and you are safe—safe for ever.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1, 2. (1) a song, or parable. wellbeloved, or friend. The Prophet gives this as God's own view of Israel, and its condition. vineyard, Ps. lxxx. 8—16. fruitful hill, lit. *on a horn, a son of fatness.*[a] (2) fenced it, or digged it. stones, wh. tended to make it barren. choicest vine, *lit.* vine of Sorek,[b] the name of a valley bet. Askelon and Gaza. tower, a slight erection for the watchman. winepress, which was cut out in the rock. It was the proof that the owner fully expected good fruitage in answer to his labour. wild grapes, not only useless, but offensive. No better than those wh. would grow on a wild vine.

The unfruitful vineyard (*vv.* 1—7).—I. The cultivation it received. 1. It was planted in a most favourable locality; 2. The provision made for its security and defence; 3. The means employed for promoting its fertility; 4. It was planted with the choicest vine: 5. A tower was built in the midst of it. II. The disappointment experienced in reference to the returns it yielded. 1. The way in which this expectation is expressed; 2. The grounds on which it rested; 3. The aggravation with which the Divine disappointment was connected. III. The doom doom with which it was visited in consequence. 1. It was extreme; 2. Richly deserved; 3. Long delayed. Apply—(1) To us as a nation; (2) To every section of the Christian Church; (3) To each in our individual capacity.

Opportunities neglected.—A prisoner is under sentence of death. The fatal hour of execution is concealed from him. but he is told that if before it strikes he petitions the governor, his life will be spared. He says, "I'll send to-morrow," and when to-morrow comes he says again, "Oh. there's time enough yet: I'll wait a little longer." Suddenly his dungeon doors open, and behold the sheriffs and the executioners! "Oh. wait, and I'll sign the petition." "No," they say, "the clock has struck; it's too late—you must die."—"*Come to Jesus.*"—"You are almost through this world," said a chaplain to a soldier, once a Sabbath scholar, who was in the last stages of disease. "Am I!" said he. "Yes, and I hope you are ready for the next." "No, I am not—not ready, not ready." "Well, my dear friend, Jesus is all ready, and waiting right here. Come now. Shall I pray!" "Oh, no, no; it is too late, too late! I ought to have come long ago." And then he told the chaplain, as calmly as he could, of the time when he was "almost a Christian," and decided to let it pass till another winter. "That was the time: I might have come then; why didn't I? why didn't I?" and pulling the blanket over his face, he sobbed aloud. It was in vain that the visitor sought to

a In the Hebrew idiom a thing is said to be the son of whatever quality it possesses.

b Je. ii. 21.

The grapes of this vine are small in size, reddish in colour, with small or scarcely any stones, and they have a very sweet taste. The present Arab name is Serki, or Sherki, or Zerka.

vv. 1, 2. *W. Reading*, ii. 628.

vv. 1—7. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iii. 51.

"Pleasure, when it is a man's chief purpose, disappoints itself; and the constant application to it palls the faculty of enjoying it, though it leaves the sense of our inability for that we wish, with a disrelish of everything else. Thus the intermediate seasons of the man of pleasure are more heavy than one would impose upon the vilest criminal."—*Steele.*

"In the pursuit of pleasure, the greatest virtues lie neglected."—*Tully.*

reason him out of his horrid despair, he only motioned him away, crying, "Don't talk to me any more—it's too late, I can't bear it."

3, 4. (3) judge, act as umpires. In their decision concerning this vineyard, he intended to make them convict themselves. (4) wherefore, said not so much to ask the reason, as to make the unreasonableness appear plainly to view.[a]

A sad canticle (*vv.* 4—6).—The similitude under which the Church is represented. The vineyard—1. Represented prosperity; 2. Was associated with rejoicing; 3. As a scene of labour; 4. Was specially noticed by God. This vineyard was in a very favourable locality, planted with the choicest vine, carefully fenced, diligently cultivated, having husbandmen living in its midst. II. The just complaint of the Lord,—founded not on the poverty, but on the nature of the crop. III. The terrible condemnation He pronounces. Observe—its mercy; its severity.

The wine-press.—The wine-press, constructed for expressing the juice of the grapes, does not seem to be a movable implement in the East: and our Lord, in the parable of the vineyard, says expressly that it was formed by digging. Chardin found the wine-press in Persia was made after the same manner; as it was a hollow place dug in the ground, and lined with mason-work. Besides this, they had what the Romans called *lacus*, the lake, a large open place or vessel, which, by a conduit or spout, received the must from the wine-press. In very hot countries it was perhaps necessary, or at least convenient, to have the lake under ground, or in a cave hewed out of the rock, for coolness, that the heat might not cause too great a fermentation, and sour the must. To these circumstances the Prophet Isaiah distinctly refers, in the beginning of the fifth chapter: "My well-beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." The tower which the Prophet mentions, and which our Lord also introduces into one of His parables is generally explained by commentators as designed for the keepers of the vineyard to watch and defend the fruits. But for this purpose it was usual to make a little temporary hut, called in the first chapter not a tower, but a cottage, which might answer for the short season while the grapes were ripening, and was afterwards removed. The tower, therefore, according to Lowth, means a building of a more permanent nature and use; the farm of the vineyard, as we may call it, containing all the offices and implements, and the whole apparatus necessary for cultivating the vineyard and making the wine. To this image in the allegory, the situation, the manner of building, the use, and the whole service of the temple, exactly answered. They have still such towers for pleasure or use, in their gardens, in the Oriental regions; for Marcus Sanatus, as quoted by Harmer, informs us that in the thirteenth century the inhabitants of Ptolemais beat down the towers of their gardens to the ground, and removed the stones of them, together with those of their burying-places, on the approach of the Tartars. The gardens of Damascus are furnished with the same kind of edifices. In most of the gardens near Aleppo,

a "God has done all that could be done for the salvation of sinners, consistently with His justice and goodness. The God of nature is, as it were, amazed at the unnatural fruit of so well cared for a vineyard." — *Fausset.*

Matt. xxiii. 37.

vv. 3, 4. *Dr. N. Brady*, i. 174; *Dr. W. Jones*, 193; *S. Gough*, 355; *Dr. G. Croft*, ii. 26; *H. Blunt*, iii. 1; *C. J. Hoare*, 37; *Abp. Sumner*, 106; *A. Roberts*, v. 248.

v. 4. *Dr. R. South*, v. 357; *Dr. N. Marshall*, i. 325; *Dr. S. Elsmere*, ii. 25; *J. Wesley*, vii. 202; *W. Jones*, i. 64; *T. Scott*, v. 335; *J. Benson*, ii. 396; *Dr. Wordsworth*, iv. 237; *H. Alford*, *Hulsean Lect.* 121.

The promises of eternal blessedness are not given to the strength of faith, but to the truth of faith; not to the degrees of faith, but to its reality.

"True blessedness consisteth in a good life and a happy death."—*Solon.*

"The more a man denies himself, the more he shall obtain from God."—*Horace.*

"When we mean to build, we first survey the plot, then draw the model; and when we see the figure of the house, then must we rate the cost of the erection." — *Shakespeare.*

"Never build after you are five-and-forty; have five years' income in hand before you lay a brick; and always calculate the expense at double the estimate."—*Kett.*

"Houses are built to live in, more than to look on; therefore, let use be preferred before uniformity, except where both may be had."—*Bacon.*

b Paxton.

summer-houses are built for the reception of the public. In others, at a greater distance, are tolerably commodious villas, to which the Franks resort in the spring, as the natives do in the summer. "To a tower, or building of this kind, it is to be supposed," says Russel, "our Lord refers in the parable: for it is scarcely to be imagined that He is speaking of the slight and inexpensive buildings in a vineyard, which, indeed, are sometimes so slight as to consist only of four poles, with a floor on the top of them, to which they ascend by a ladder: but rather of those elegant turrets erected in gardens, where the Eastern people of fortune spend some considerable part of their time." But this excellent writer expressly admits that in all the orchards near Aleppo, a small square watch-house is built for the accommodation of the watchmen in the fruit season, or, in their stead, temporary bowers are constructed of wood, and thatched with green reeds and branches. Small and detached square towers for the accommodation of the watchmen appointed to guard the vineyards, are still to be met with in Judæa. It is more probably to the substantial watch-tower that the Saviour alludes, than either to the offices of the vineyard or the commodious summer-house.[b]

5, 6. (5) **go to,** *comp.* Ge. xi. 3, 4. **take . . hedge,** leave it open to all foes. The hedge is usually of the prickly-pear tree. **wall,** wh. was sometimes put up outside the hedge. (6) **waste,** by ceasing to tend and to culture it. **clouds,** put for favourable natural influences.

The sinfulness of lost opportunities.—Wilfully to let opportunities go by is a wickedness and an inexcusable folly: whence the still more foolish regrets which tear the heart that has been so unjust to itself—for folly is only another name for thorn and prickle seed; but a greater folly yet is to stand waiting and wishing for opportunities, when in fact they circle us, if we will but keep on the "*qui vive.*" As the best school in respect of high duties is the practice of the little ones of common life, so the best and shortest road to happiness and true philosophy is to make the most of what lies beside us, and enjoy all we can of the life we have, leaving it to God to determine what fortune shall attend our steps. "*Dominus providebit.*" If we trusted more in His spontaneous generosity, we should less often be disconcerted by the failure of our own preparations, and should find that the Divine intent is that life shall be felicitous. The same did we ask ourselves more frequently what we have, rather than brood so ungratefully upon what we have not. Though we may be poor and afflicted in comparison with some, in contrast with others we are opulent and blest.[a]

7. for, *etc.*, proceeding to give the application of the parable.[a] **house of Israel,** the whole people. God's prophecies and messages do not often recognise the division of the Israelites into two kingdoms. He addresses the entire covenant people. **judgment,** *etc.*,[b] the play upon words is striking in the Heb. "He looked for *mishpat*, but behold *mispat* (bloodshed): for *tsedaqua*, but behold *tsecaqua* (the cry that attends anarchy covetousness, and dissipation).

The dying soldier.—A soldier, who had enlisted as a Christian, but had for three years, though a man of uprightness and in-

vv. 4, 5. *J. Seed*, ii. 69; *R. Southgate*, ii. 93.

Proverbs.—"What may be done at any time will be done at no time. Strike while the iron is hot. Take time while time is, for time will away."—*English.* "God keep you from 'It is too late.' When the fool has made up his mind, the market has gone by."—*Spanish.* "A little too late, much too late."—*Dutch.* "Some refuse roast meat, and afterwards long for the smoke of it."—*Italian.*

If importunity can prevail with an unjust judge, what must it do with a just one?

a L. H. Grindon.

a 2 Sa. xii. 5.

b Lu. xiii. 7.

v. 7. *J. Barker*, i. 311.

tegrity, done nothing to make known the name of Christ, said when dying, "I die as a Christian, and I die contented; but oh, if I could have died as a Christian worker!" "I am peaceful and assured in view of death," he said again, "but I am not joyful and glad; those three lost years keep coming back upon me." Then lying a moment quiet with closed eyes, he added, "Chaplain, do you suppose we shall be able to forget anything in heaven? I would like to forget those three years." [c]—*The lost opportunity.*—A passenger comes bustling into a railway station. He is just too late, for the engine has sounded its whistle, and the train is gliding rapidly out of sight. He looks after it in despair. He had important business to transact. Ruinous may be the consequences of delay. He sits down on his trunk, leaning his head upon his hand, and, absorbed in vain regrets, gazes vacantly forward. But see! another train is at the platform, just about to start for the same destination. Other passengers have arrived, and are eagerly crowding in. The bell rings, again the whistle sounds, again the engine bears away its living freight, and, starting up, our friend again bewails an opportunity lost! Oh! sit not down again despondingly. There is yet another chance; throw not this away too, but at once take your seat in this third train which now is preparing to follow the other two.[d]

8—10. (8) **woe**, *comp.* our Lord's denunciations, Mat. xxiii. 13—29. The Prophet gives point to his message by dealing with particular sins. **house to house**, in avaricious grasping after property.[a] **no place**, *lit.* even to a failure (or defect) of place; *i.e.* until there is no room for any one but yourselves. **alone**, *etc.*, owners of everything around them.[b] (9) **in mine ears**, as if already God heard the sound of the coming woe. **shall be**, better, *are becoming;* the Prophet sees the penalty actually beginning. (10) **one bath**, instead of the 500 which it ought to produce. **homer**, "eight bushels of seed would yield only three pecks of produce.[c] The picture is of the complete failure of harvest and vintage.

Covetousness (*vv.* 8—10).—I. The sin here denounced. Covetousness defined. It is—1. Desiring more than is necessary for the purposes of life; 2. Worldliness; 3. Trusting and delighting in it; 4. Selfish monopoly. II. Its punishment. 1. Here—disappointment, loss, ruin, death; 2. Hereafter—misery, destitution. III. The certainty of this punishment. 1. God announces it to His servants; 2. Few believe it.[d]

Decayed mansions in the East.—On the banks of the Nile we have gazed on the crumbling walls of once fair and noble dwellings, now left desolate under their towering palms, and seen that even the low mud huts which surrounded them are raised above the inundations on the eminences of buildings long since fallen to decay. A day and night actually passed within the walls of a ruined mansion in another land enabled us to realise the horrors of such an abode. Obliged to hide ourselves from the great power of the sun's rays, we sought the only shelter which presented itself, that of a desolate dwelling; yes, great and fair, without inhabitant. The owls and bats, indeed, had long held undisputed possession there. What a disturbance our entrance made, as the latter whirled in thousands through the lofty apartments, their leathery wings, as they cut through the air,

c Sword and Trowel.

"Opportunity is like a string of stepping-stones across a ford. The traveller, coming up to them, may find the river so swollen with the rains that the stones are all but covered. If he delay, though his home be on the opposite bank, and full in sight, it may be too late to cross, and he may have a journey of several miles to reach his home."—*Union Magazine.*

d Newman Hall.

a "The monopoly of houses and landed property was diametrically opposed to the spirit of the Mosaic law, and a virtual infraction of the enactment relative to the year of jubilee."—*Henderson.*

Le. xxv. 10, 13, 25, etc.; Lu. xii. 15—21.

b Still, one of the gravest of national and social evils, is the gathering of the landed property into a very few hands.

c Fausset.

The homer was a dry measure equal to ten baths; the ephah perhaps equalled six pecks.

"The world" and the flesh are the two great enemies that we are in danger of being overpowered by; yet we are in no danger if

we do not ourselves yield to them."—*Mat. Henry.*

d Dr. Lyth.

"All our removes in this world are out from one wilderness to another."—*P. Henry.*

"All sudden change is ill."—*Southey.*

"Gather the rose-buds while ye may, old Time is still a-flying; and that same flower that blooms to-day, to-morrow shall be dying."—*Herrick.*

"Blessedness is a whole eternity, older than damnation."—*Solon.*

making that strange and whizzing sound so peculiar to them. The owls were also disturbed from the dark corners where they had probably made their nests, and towards evening the walls resounded with their dismal cries. But as night came on, what can we say of the horror of that abode where we had to stay, or how anxiously we waited and watched for the morning! We had taken refuge upstairs—the tottering staircase to that part of the building being, as we felt assured, our best security against the larger beasts of prey which, no doubt, were prowling about the terraces and gardens and wilderness around. We heard, indeed, their not very distant growls, while troops of jackals passed and repassed with their wild and melancholy cries. The flooring of the room in which we were was broken in the middle and we could see down to the desolate chambers below, where rank weeds were flourishing. The peepul, and other trees by hundreds, had also taken root in the massive stonework of the building, and their roots having forced their way through, were fast hastening on the work of destruction. On descending the stairs in the early morning, we passed a large cobra, coiled up in the shade of the broken walls and stones, and then discerned the shadow of a wolf, which was skulking about amongst the ruins. A large banyan tree was completely covered with the vampire bats, or flying foxes as they are called, which were hanging to the branches. This building, now desolate, but once great and fair, was the retreat of wild beasts, and the hold of every unclean and hateful bird and reptile. With thankfulness for our preservation we quitted the spot where we had passed such a terrible night.

a "Early drinking was considered by the Jews, as it was by the Romans, a mark of the most depraved sensuality."—*Henderson.*

b Eccl. x. 16, 17; comp. Is. xxii. 13, lvi. 12; Am. vi. 3.

c "Sensual indulgences steel the heart against religious impressions, and cause their victims to sport on the very brink of ruin."—*Henderson.*

"The use of music is lawful in itself; but when it is excessive, when we set our hearts upon it, misspend time on it, so that it crowds our spiritual and divine pleasures, and draws away the heart from God,

11, 12. (11) **rise early**, the Eastern sign of earnestness and eagerness.[a] **strong drink**, taken from other than the grape. Related to wine as our word "spirits" is. **continue until night**,[b] blindly giving themselves up to mere physical enjoyment. (12) **harp**, *etc.*, joining riotous mirth to sensual indulgence. **tabret**, or tambourine. **pipe**, or flute.[c] **work . . Lord**, *i.e.* His judgments, wh. are actually about them. **operation**, *etc.*, in vindicating His righteousness, and punishing the guilty. In self-indulgence they refuse to heed even the alarming dispensations of Divine Providence.

The degradation and ruin of intemperance (*vv.* 11, 12).—I. The sin, with its concomitants and connections, described in the text. 1. The Prophet refers to intemperance and its associate habits of festivity and dissipation—it is both bad in principle and degrading to character, it has a greater tendency than almost any other to destroy the feeling of shame and to harden conscience, it leads to other great sins, it is dangerous to the peace of society, and puts to hazard the lives of men; 2. The Prophet points out the connection between intemperance and unhallowed festivity, and an infidel disregard of the works and ways of God. II. The woe denounced by the Prophet upon the sons and daughters of intemperance. Learn:—1. Habits of intemperance are progressively formed: 2. Beware of the first step, of the first temptation, of the first immoderate indulgence.[d]

Drinking habits in the East.—Such practices as these condemned by the Prophet are, unhappily, still common in the East. Mr. Morier, in his narrative of travels, describes the following scene:—"Returning from a morning ride about seven o'clock, I

saw, at about forty yards from the roadside, a party of well-dressed Persians seated on a carpet close to a rising ground in the plain, with a small stream of water, near a field of rising corn, flowing before them, and surrounded by their servants and horses. As I passed, they sent a lad to me with a message to the following purpose: 'The Khan sends his compliments, says be happy, and join his party.' At the same time the whole company hallooed out to me as loud as they could, 'Be happy! be happy!' I afterwards learnt that this party was given by a Yuzbashee, or colonel of the king's troops, and that they were in the height of enjoyment when I passed, for they were all apparently much intoxicated. We one day met a party in one of the king's pleasure-houses nearly under similar circumstances; and we found that the Persians, when they commit a debauch, arise betimes, and esteem the morning as the best time for beginning to drink wine, by which means they carry on their excess until night."—*They consider not.*—This awful picture has already received a verification in the past history of Israel, and will yet again be verified even more markedly. But though primarily belonging to them, is it not equally true of ourselves? Does this chapter admit of no application to favoured Protestant England? In our case, indeed, the judgments may for a time be chiefly moral—blindness of heart, famine of truth, moral perversion; but these things are judgments. When men, after having been brought into near proximity to light, suddenly renounce the things which they have professed to receive, and rush eagerly into darkness, is it not an evidence that delusion, causing them to believe lies, has fallen upon them; and is that no judgment? There is no infliction more terrible than that of judicial blindness. Is not society in England dividing itself between sacerdotal idolatry and philosophic scepticism? Can the anointed eye of faith look upon our stately temples, our "broad-ways," our marts, our cities, and not see them crowded by "men of hunger,"—men famished as to the bread of life, and yet they know it not? Yet the operation of the hand of God, in judicially withdrawing light and sending darkness, is not recognised. There is no humiliation—no confession. On the contrary, there was never an hour of greater moral intoxication. True indeed it is that the harp and the viol, the tabret and the pipe, and wine are literally in their feasts—outward noise and revelry are not wanting; but the moral intoxication and the resulting blindness are more terrible still. Therefore the hour is drawing nigh when Hades will claim her own. The pomp, and the multitude, and the noise are regarded as her pomp, her multitude, her noise. He that rejoiceth in these things rejoiceth in her, and she will soon claim him as her own. "Hades hath enlarged her appetite and opened her mouth without measure, and there goeth down her pomp, and her multitude, and her noise, and he that in her rejoiceth." May we be enabled steadily to view the things around us in the light of this awful verse! Judgment may tarry, but it will surely come. "I will recompense, saith the Lord."[c]

13, 14. (13) **are gone**, the Prophet, seeing that they will surely go, speaks as if they had gone. **no knowledge**, shown in their foolish, wilful recklessness. Or the expression may mean "without knowing it," "unawares."[a] **famished**, *lit.* their rich men are *men of famine.*[b] **their multitude**, prob. those depen-

then it turns into sin to us."—*Mat. Henry.*

See Pr. xxiii. 29, 30; Eph. v. 18, 19; Col. iii. 16, Ja. v. 13.

vv. 11—18. *Dr. R. Harris*, 283.

vv. 11, 12. *Bp. Blackall*, 405.

v. 12. *Dr. Watts*, ii. 166; *S. Perrott*, 51; *Dr. H. Blair*, iv. 113; *S. Hodson*, 55; *W. M. Harte*, 305; *W. Jacobson*, 224.

d Dr. F. A. Cox.

"The Persians, when they commit a debauch, arise betimes, and esteem the morning as the best time for beginning to drink wine, by which means they carry on their excess till night."—*Morier.*

"No man oppresses thee, O free and independent franchiser! but does not this stupid porter-pot oppress thee? No son of Adam can bil thee come or go; but this absurd pot of heavy wet this can and does! Thou art the thrall, not of Cedric the Saxon, but of thy own brutal appetites, and this scoured dish of liquor. And thou pratest of thy 'liberty,' thou entire blockhead"—*Carlyle.*

e J. Newton.

a J. A. Alexander, etc.

b "All their glory has faded away; it has vanished into a poor and

pitiful handful of starvelings."—*Wordsworth.*

c "Poetically it is represented as *enlarging itself* immensely, in order to receive the countless hosts of Jews wh. should perish."—*Fausset.*

Hell, from Ger. *Hölle*, original *hohle*, a hollow.

Sheol was figured as a vast and profound subterranean region, the entrance to wh. was furnished with gates and bars, into which men went down, and from which there was no return to the present world.

Comp. Is. xiv. 9—15.

d Spk. Com.

e Sir T. Browne.

"Misery and ignorance are always the cause of great evils. Misery is easily excited to anger, and ignorance soon yields to perfidious counsels."—*Addison.*

f I. Walton.

a "The judicial act is a realisation of the idea of righteousness. Holiness and righteousness belong together like lamps and burning."—*Nägelsbach.*

"In that hour of righteous retribution His absolute supremacy and holiness shall stand out clearly to view."—*Spk. Com.*

Eze. xxviii. 22; Ro. ii. 5; Re. xv. 3, 4.

dent on the great and rich. (14) **hell**, Sheol: the unseen world of spirits: not the place of torment. Fig. way of saying that many shall die in the famine and perilous time immediately coming.[e] "The insatiable greed of Hades (or Sheol) was the reflex of their own lust of earthly good."[d] Pr. xxvii. 20.

Pompous funerals.—But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death makes a folly of posthumous memory. . . . Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us. A small fire sufficeth for life, great flames seemed too little after death, while men vainly affected precious pyres, and to burn like Sardanapalus; but the wisdom of funeral laws found the folly of prodigal blazes, and reduced undoing fires unto the rule of sober obsequies, wherein few could be so mean as not to provide wood, pitch, a mourner, and an urn. Five languages secured not the epitaph of Gordianus. The man of God lives longer without a tomb than any by one, invisibly interred by angels, and adjudged to obscurity, though not without some remarks directing human discovery.[e]—*Absence of misery a mercy.*—And that our present happiness may appear to be the greater, and we the more thankful for it, I will beg you to consider with me how many do, even at this very time, lie under the torment of the stone, the gout, and toothache; and this we are free from. And every misery that I miss is a new mercy; and therefore let us be thankful. There have been, since we met, others that have met disasters of broken limbs; some have been blasted, others thunder-strucken; and we have been freed from these and all those many other miseries that threaten human nature: let us therefore rejoice and be thankful. Nay, which is a far greater mercy, we are free from the insupportable burden of an accusing, tormenting conscience—a misery that none can bear: and therefore let us praise Him for His preventing grace, and say, Every misery that I miss is a new mercy. Nay, let me tell you, there be many that have forty times our estates, that would give the greatest part of it to be healthful and cheerful like us, who, with the expense of a little money, have ate, and durnk, and laughed, and angled, and sung, and slept securely: and rose next day, and cast away care, and sung, and laughed, and angled again, which are blessings rich men cannot purchase with all their money.[f]

15—17. (15) **mean man**, *comp.* ch. ii. 9. The moral significance of the word *mean* is not intended; the reference is to those in lowly circumstances. **eyes . . lofty**, referring to the habit of walking with uplifted head, wh. is characteristic of proud people. (16) **exalted**, or honoured in men's view. **sanctified**, by the display of the holiness of His character, seen in the just punishment of the wicked.[a] (17) **lambs feed**, where the people had lived. **strangers**, nomads, wandering tribes. Judæa should become a vast pasturage. Le. xxvi. 43.

The lambs of the fold (*v.* 17).—There are two ways of regarding this text. I. Taken literally, we have—1. An accomplished prophecy—the waste condition of the Holy Land—overrun with Bedouins and strangers; 2. A certain proof of the faithfulness of God's word—there may be delay, but all shall be fulfilled. II. Taken figuratively, we have—1. God's care of His lambs—He feeds them with sufficiency, in peace; 2. His judgments upon the proud—He takes them away, gives their substance to others.[b]

—*The mean man* (*v.* 9).—I. Let us speak about the mean man. He is—1. Reserved; 2. Designing; 3. He is self-absorbed. II. Let us speak to the mean man—(1) He belongs to the Christian community. 1. Know thyself; 2. Know the harm you do; 3. Know the amount of good you omit to do. III. Let us listen to the mean man. 1. I am not conscious of meanness, no one ever told me that I was; 2. I am a professor of religion, have been so for many years,—has not my demeanour been habitually correct? IV. Let us speak for the mean man. 1. We must exercise charity concerning him: 2. We must pray for him; 3. We should strive to judge him fairly.[c]

Hybrid men.—There remains one other class of men which ought not to be passed unnoticed. It is a sort of hybrid race, mongrel, heterogeneous, anomalous, which we are at a loss where to classify. We refer to your exquisites, your fancy gentlemen, gentlemen loafers, and their yet more exquisite counterparts of the other sex. These notables are not simple substances, but compounds – compositions — cosmetics of exquisite mixture — bitter, sweet, oily, odoriferous—rare and exquisite specimens of humanity. While we cannot form them into a distinct class, we cannot arrange them in any one class already named. They belonged rightfully to at least three of the above specified classes. They belonged to the silver coats—or are of the gold-fringed caste—gilt men—the gilding often as thin as the most delicate foil, and covering a mass of the basest sort of metal. Again, these exquisites show strong affinities to the class we denominate gaseous. Just perforate these bags of wind and discharge their gas, and they would collapse, and not much would be left of them. And another portion of this class bears quite as near an affinity to your wish-a washy, dough-brained gentry.[d]

18, 19. (18) **draw . . vanity,** fig. from the persevering labour of cattle in drawing a waggon. They, as it were, yoke themselves in the harness of iniquity, and put forth all their strength to drag the burden along.[a] (19) **let him,** *etc.*, the spirit at once of unbelief and defiance. Whatever Isaiah may say, they do not believe in a day of Divine retribution.[b] **counsel,** or threat of punishment, of wh. the Prophet made so much.

Power of sin over the unregenerate.—So long as a man is dead in trespasses and sin, there is no iniquity which may not get the mastery of him. Where the body is, thither will the vultures of hell be gathered together. The devil finding him dead, calls up his hosts of temptations and his bands of evils to feed on him. The great destroyer, who at other times is as a lion, often plays the part of a jackal, whose cry when it finds its prey is said to sound exactly like the words—

"Dead Hindoo, dead Hindoo!
Where, where, where, where!
Here, here, here, here!"

Nothing but the new life can secure a man from the worst fiends in the Pandemonium of vice, for they gather like a scattered pack to a feast when they hear their master cry—

"Dead sinner, dead sinner!
Where, where, where, where?
Here, here, here, here!"

Vices seldom come alone; where there is room for one devil,

r. 16. *W. Dyer, Christ's Titles*; *J. Malham*, 137.

b Dr. Lyth.

c Stems and Twigs.

"Some men are rough, uncouth, growling, grumbling, like the bear; others are lion-like, or tiger-like, or wolfish, or fox-like; some are timid as the deer, or gentle as the lamb, or possessed of the strength, beauty, and alertness of the leopard; others are morose and surly like the mastiff, or arrogant and overbearing like the bull-dog, or snarling and snapping like the cur, for ever barking, but never having the courage to bite."
—*Read.*

d Read.

a Other explanations are, "Woe to them who draw *calamity* with cords of iniquity, and punishment with ropes of wickedness."—*Stagg.* *by Henderson.*

"Woe to them that harness themselves as brute beasts to iniquity, with cords of falsehood, and drag on the weight of sin, as a waggon, with the ropes of vicious habits."
—*Wordsworth.*

"Not content with the ordinary progress of iniquity, they spin ungodly theories, by which to make their massive loads of sin move more readily through

the land."—*Spk. Com.*

"Like the beasts lay themselves to the traces with all their might, in order to start the load, so these lay themselves out to sin with all their might."—*Nägelsbuch.*

b Comp. Ge. iv. 23, 24.

vv. 18, 19. *R. W. Evans*, i. 82.

c C. H. Spurgeon.

a "Those do a great deal of wrong to God and religion, and conscience — to their own souls, and to the souls of others, who misrepresent these, and put false colours upon them: who call drunkenness good fellowship and covetousness good husbandry, and, when they persecute the people of God, think they do Him good service: and, on the other hand, who call seriousness ill-nature, and sober singularity ill-breeding, and say all manner of evil falsely concerning the ways of godliness."—*Matthew Henry.*

v. 20. *Dr. R. South*, ii. 313, vi. 3, 45; *Gurdon, Boyle Lec.* 295; *Dr. J. Trapp*, i. 257.

b S. G. Buckingham.

c H. W. Beecher.

a "Drunkenness not merely incapacitates judges

seven other spirits more wicked than himself will find a lodging. We may say of sins as Longfellow of birds of prey, in his song of Hiawatha:—

"Never stoops the soaring vulture
On his quarry in the desert,
On the sick or wounded bison,
But another vulture watching,
From his high aërial look-out
Sees the downward plunge and follows;
And a third pursues the second.
Coming from the invisible ether,
First a speck, and then a vulture,
Till the air is dark with pinions."

Sin aroused by the law.—A contented citizen of Milan, who had never passed beyond the walls during the course of sixty years, being ordered by the governor not to stir beyond its gates, became immediately miserable, and felt so powerful an inclination to do that which he had so long contentedly neglected, that on his application for a release from this restraint being refused, he became quite melancholy, and at last died of grief.[c]

20. **call evil good**, subverting thus the primary moral distinctions.[a] **darkness for light**, by their infidel theories. Their moral perception is darkened by their wilfulness.

Confounding right and wrong (*v.* 20).—Our subject is the guilt of confounding right and wrong, by changing their names. I. It confounds moral distinctions, and perplexes one in regard to his duty. II. But it not only perplexes men,—it deceives and misleads them. Now how is this confounding of right and wrong done? 1. When we slander one another by giving false names to each other's acts; 2. When we deceive ourselves in respect to our own character and conduct; 3. When we relieve our consciences by giving to our actions false names; 4. When by giving decent names to gross sins the standard of public morality is lowered. Learn:—(1) Be not deceived by false names; (2) Do not practise such impositions upon others; 3. Call things by their right names.[b]

Effects of sin.—Penalties are often so long delayed, that men think they shall escape them; but at some time they are certain to follow. When the whirlwind sweeps through the forest, at its first breath that giant tree, with all its boughs, falls crashing to the ground. But it had been preparing to fall twenty years. Twenty years before, it had received a gash. Twenty years before, the water commenced to settle in at some notch, and from thence decay began to reach in with silent fingers towards the heart of the tree. Every year the work of death progressed, till at length it stood all rottenness, and the first gale felled it to the ground. Now there are men who for twenty years have shamed the day and wearied the night with their debaucheries, but who yet seem strong and vigorous, and exclaim, "You need not talk of penalties! Look at me! I am as hale and hearty to-day as ever." But, in reality, they are full of weakness and decay. They have been preparing to fall for twenty years, and the first disease strikes them down in a moment.[c]

21—23. (21) **wise . . eyes**, *i.e.* proudly self-confident. "They are their own oracle." Those who thus deify self, count Divine

guidance and wisdom to be wholly unnecessary. (22) **mighty,** *etc.*, here meaning heroes, perhaps with reference to the leading military men, or the judges. (23) for reward, or on receiving bribes Still one of the common forms of Eastern iniquity. **righteousness,** or the right, the just claim of the innocent.[a]

Intellectual pride (*v.* 21).—Woe to the intellectual proud. I. To the self-conceited sceptic, who sits in judgment upon the Word of God and condemns it. II. To the self-conceited enthusiast, who substitutes his own fancies in the face of Divine truth. III. To the self-conceited Pharisee, who trusts in his own works. IV. To the self-conceited sinner, who despises instruction. V. Woe, woe, woe! For they shall all perish.[b]

Drunkenness.—It is a perfect shipwreck of a man; the pilot is drunk, and the helm dashed in pieces, and the ship first reels, and by swallowing too much, is itself swallowed up at last. And therefore the *Naris Agrigentina*, the madness of the young fellows of Agrigentum, who, being drunk, fancied themselves in a storm, and the house the ship, was more than the wild fancy of their cups; it was really so, they were all cast away, they were broken in pieces by the foul disorder of the storm. "The senses languish, the spark of divinity that dwells within is quenched; and the mind snorts, dead with sleep and fulness in the fouler regions of the belly." So have I seen the eye of the world looking upon a fenny bottom, and, drinking up too free draughts of moisture, he gathered them into a cloud, and that cloud crept about his face, and made him first look red, and then covered him with darkness and an artificial night; so is our reason at a feast. . . . The clouds gather about the head, and according to the method and period of the children and productions of darkness, it first grows red, and that redness turns into an obscurity and a thick mist, and reason is lost to all use and profitableness of wise and sober discourses; "a cloud of folly and distraction darkens the soul," and makes it crass and material, polluted and heavy, clogged and loaden like the body; and, there cannot be anything said worse, reason turns into folly, wine and flesh into a knot of clouds, the soul itself into a body, and the spirit into corrupted meat: here is nothing left but the rewards and portions of a fool, to be reaped and enjoyed there, where flesh and corruption shall dwell to eternal ages.[c]

24, 25. (24) **devoureth,** or licketh up. **stubble,** or dried grass. Nothing could provide a more impressive figure of hopeless sinking into destruction than that of chaff and dried grass sinking in the flames. **go up as dust,** shrivelling away, and driven off by the wind.[a] **cast away,** or rejected. (25) **therefore,** distinctly on account of the people's sin. **against them,** that very hand which had been so tenderly and graciously *for* them. **hills . . tremble,**[b] with the tread of the foe. **carcases,** of the slain. **torn,** or were as refuse. **all this,** *i.e.* even more judgments than these would be needed.

Happiness of the people of God.—Israel, or the people of God, are happy; because heirs of all the gracious promises which God hath made. In Christ, the promises are "Yea, and Amen," and are made good. It is a happiness to be under promises, though the thing promised be posthumous to us. He is not poor that hath good debts lying in so rich a hand as God's; and we may

for the discharge of their official functions, but tempts them to make a trade of justice, with a view to the indulgence of this appetite."—*J. A. Alexander.*

v. 21. *Dr. W. Sherlock*, ii. 1, i. 427.

v. 22. *P. Skelton*, ii. 322; *P. Stockdale*, 391; *J. I. S. Cellerier*, 167.

"O that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains! that we should with joy, revel, pleasure, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts."—*Shakespeare.*

"In the bottle, discontent seeks for comfort, cowardice for courage, and bashfulness for confidence."—*Johnson.*

b Dr. Lyth.

c Jer. Taylor.

a "Those roots and blossoms that ought properly to be fresh and full of sap, shall fly away, dissolved as they are in dust and decay, as easily as hay and stubble are devoured by the flames."—*Nägelsbach.*

Mat. iii. 12.

b Explained by *Hendewerk* as the earthquake of Am. i. 1; Zec. xiv. 5.

find it true in our experience, that all the while God keeps in His hand the principal. He pays His people full interest for forbearance, and maintains them in their minority with some competencies out of the revenues which He hath entailed upon them when they come of age.[c]

26—28. (26) ensign, or signal to call them to execute His judgments. "The standard was to mark the place of rendezvous."[a] It does not seem that any particular nation is here referred to. hiss, a fig. from drawing bees out of a hive by hissing or whistling. swiftly, as a swarm of bees. (27) none weary, *etc.*, strong poetical figures of the greatest activity and readiness for conflict. girdle[b] . . loosed, for resting times. They would move forward without any intermission. (28) horses' hoofs . . flint, as the horses were not shod, the hardness of the hoof was a prime quality of a good horse. whirlwind, raising up such a dust as they went.

National judgments (*vv.* 26—30).—I. God uses one nation to punish another. II. Summons them at His pleasure. III. Disposes them to do His will,—promptly, efficiently. IV. Fits them for His service. V. Ensures their success. VI. The transgressor has no hope of escape.[c]

Horseshoes (*v.* 28).—The shoeing of horses with iron plates nailed to the hoof is quite a modern practice, and was unknown to the ancients, as appears from the silence of the Greek and Roman writers, especially those that treat of horse-medicine, who could not have passed over a matter so obvious, and of such importance, that now the whole science takes its name from it, being called by us farriery. The horseshoes of leather and of iron, which are mentioned: the silver and the gold shoes, with which Nero and Poppea shod their mules, used occasionally to preserve the hoofs of delicate cattle, or for vanity, were of a very different kind; they enclosed the whole hoof, as in a case, or as a shoe does a man's foot, and were bound or tied on. For this reason the strength, firmness, and solidity of a horse's hoof was of much greater importance with them than with us, and was esteemed one of the first praises of a fine horse. For want of this artificial defence to the foot, which our horses have, Amos, vi. 12, speaks of it as a thing as much impracticable to make horses run upon a hard rock, as to plough up the same rock with oxen. These circumstances must be taken into consideration, in order to give us a full notion of the propriety and force of the image by which the Prophet sets forth the strength and excellence of the Babylonish cavalry, which made a great part of the strength of the Assyrian army.[d]

29, 30. (29) roaring, perhaps the sound of their hurried march reminded the Prophet of the growl of the lion over his prey.[a] (30) roaring . . sea, suggested by the previous roaring. Likening the coming foe to the incoming tide of the sea, the Prophet figures the people as looking behind them to the land for safety, and finding there only darkness and trouble.[b]

Sin conceals the favour of God.—Sin is as a thick cloud, stopping the sunshine of God's mercy; but if we turn from sin, this will melt the cloud, and cause the Sun of Righteousness to shine upon us. Sin is a wall of separation between God and us. To turn from sin will break down this wall. To turn from sin

c R. Vines (1645).

a "Reference is to the military custom of planting a pole with a flag on a high mountain, either to serve as a signal of rendezvous or to point out the direction in which an army is to proceed. The latter is here intended." —*Henderson.*

b The military girdle is meant, which had attached to it the sheath with the sword.

c Dr. Lyth.

v. 26. "The metaphor is taken from the practice of those that keep bees, who draw them out of their hives into the fields, and lead them back again, by a hiss or a whistle."—*Lowth.*

"Many do with opportunities as children do at the sea-shore: they fill their little hands with sand, and then let the grains fall through, one by one, till all are gone."—*Rev. T. Jones.*

d Bp. Lowth.

a Hab. i. 6—10; Je. xxxii. 5—28, xxxvii. 8—10.

b "Let the distressed look which way they will, everything appears dismal; for, if God frown upon us, how can any creature smile?" — *Mat. Henry.*

is a key to unlock all the chests of God's mercies. Oh, the Divine rhetoric and omnipotent efficacy of repentance! This is that rainbow, which, if God seeth shining in our hearts, He will never drown our souls. That star which will bring us to Christ. A repenting faith ties God's hands, and charms His wrath. There is no thunderbolt so great, no wrath so furious in God, but repentance will abolish it.[e]

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1, 2. (1) in the year, but *before*, not *after*, the death of the king (B.C. 758). **saw,** pictured in vision. There is, however, no *description* of the Divine person. **the Lord,** Adonai, the supreme Ruler and Judge. **throne,** "the Prophet sees the earthly temple transfigured until it seemed a miniature of the Universal Temple."[a] **train,** the hem, or fringes, of His robe. The skirts of His glory. (2) **seraphim,** antitypes of the cherubic figures that were on either side of the mercy-seat.[b] The word means the *fiery ones*.[c] **covered his face,** as unworthy to look upon God. **covered his feet,** an Eastern token of reverence. **did fly,** the wings were set ready at once to fly in obedience to Div. command.

The vision of Isaiah (*vv.* 1—8).—I. We have to observe the vision which the Prophet beheld. It was—1. A vision of the Divine supremacy; 2. Of the Divine attendants; 3. It connects holiness with the Divine greatness; 4. By this connection, a remarkable effect is stated to have been produced. II. The effect which this vision produced upon the Prophet's mind—1. As a man; 2. As an intended messenger of God. III. The sustaining visitation which was made, in connection with the effect produced. 1. The agent sent: note his celerity; 2. The assurance communicated; 3. The manner in which the assurance is testified. IV. The commission which, in connection with this visitation, was proposed and accepted. 1. The messenger who goes out, God sends by His own power; 2. Such messengers are fully devoted to God; 3. They must proceed without debate to the object of their mission.[d]

Additional notes on above verses.—(*v.* 1) Some have supposed that the scene of the Prophet's vision was the celestial world. Henderson believes it is more appropriate to take the word in its ordinary acceptation, as applying to the temple at Jerusalem, especially as mention is made of the altar. The Hebrew properly signifies a large or capacious building; though used regarding the temple in general, it is employed particularly to designate the middle or body of the temple, as opposed to the holiest, and the porch or vestibule. (*vv.* 2—7) "Above it [or him] stood the seraphim." In the original there is nothing corresponding to "the." Nor does the Hebrew necessarily imply standing upright on the feet, but merely being present. From what is said afterwards it would seem that the position of the seraphim was that of hovering on the expanded wings over the throne of God. It might be rendered, "seraphim were attending." The song was of the nature of an antiphony rather than that of a chorus, since distinct voices were heard. Many see in the repetition of the word "holy" an ascription of praise to the Three-One God.

e E. Calamy (1642).

a "Isaiah is outside, near the altar in front of the temple. The doors are supposed to be open, and the veil hiding the holy of holies to be withdrawn, unfolding to his view a vision of God, represented as an Easternmonarch, attended by seraphim as His ministers of state, and with a robe and flowing train (a badge of dignity in the E.), which filled the temple." —*Fausset.*

b Comp. Rev. iv.

c Fr. Heb. *saraph*, to burn.

v. 1. *Dr. G. Croft*, ii. 37; *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Ks.* 214.

vv. 1-3. *C. Wheatley, Moyer Lec.* 236.

v. 2. *J. Saurin*, vii. 153.

d J. Parsons.

"If an angel should visit our earth and vend such kind of Gospel as is often hawked from the press and pulpit, though he preached morality with most seraphic fervency, and till his wings dropped off, he would never turn one

soul to God, nor produce a single grain of true morality arising from the love of God, and aiming only at His glory."—*Berridge.*

One of the mottoes on the walls of the temple at Delphos was, "Know thy opportunity."

Keil and Delitzsch believe that the passage throws partial light upon the nature of the seraphim, and the reason they bear that name. "The word cannot be connected," they say, "with a verb *seraph*, to tower high, to be exalted, or highly honoured, which yields a sense that does not commend itself. On the other hand, to follow Knobel, who reads *sherathim* (worshipper of God), and thus presents the Lexicon with a new word, and to pronounce 'seraphim,' a copyist's error, would be a rash concession to the heaven-storming potency supposed to reside in the ink of a German scholar!" Taking the seraphic name as derived from a root-word referring to light or fire, they interpret it to mean that these spirits were vehicles or media of Divine love, as the cherubim were of Divine wrath. One of them absolves the seer by means of the fire of love.

3, 4. (3) one . . another, responding the one to the other. holy,[a] the repetition of the word three times is supposed to be an indication of the trinity in God. *Holiness* is the keynote of Is.'s prophecies. whole . . glory, *i.e.* there is no object within the compass of the world wh. does not proclaim the perfections of God.[b] (4) posts, bases of the thresholds. filled with smoke, *comp.* Ex. xix. 18, xl. 34; 1 Ki. viii. 10. Intended to produce a solemn awe in the beholder; perhaps also to moderate for Isaiah the vision of Divine glory.

The vast and the minute.—

"There's nothing great
Or small," hath said a poet of our day;
And truly I reiterate, "There's nothing small
No pebble at my feet but proves a sphere;
No chaffinch but implies a cherubin;
No hum of lily-muffled bee but finds
Some coupling music with the whirling stars.
"Earth's crammed with heaven;
And every common bush afire with God;
But only those who see take off their shoes;
The rest sit round it, and eat blackberries."[c]

5. woe is me, the awe produced by the sense of God's presence passed into a deep humiliation and fear, in the feeling of his own sinfulness.[a] unclean lips, unworthy, therefore, to carry the messages of so glorious a Lord:[b] or, perhaps, to share in such worship as seraphim offered. seen the King,[c] in one of His most glorious manifestations.

Isaiah's vision of Christ (vv. 5—7).—I. The Prophet's vision was glorious in its object—the King, etc. 1. The Divinity of His person; 2. The sovereignty of His character. II. Instructive in its design. It illustrates—1. The nature of salvation; 2. The medium of salvation; 3. The assurance of salvation. III. It was gracious in its influence. 1. It was deeply humbling; 2. It was personally sanctifying; 3. It was highly encouraging. Apply:—(1) Search the Scriptures, which reveal Christ and show the way of salvation; (2) Diligently improve the privileges we enjoy.[d]

Christian purity.—Purity of heart is a trait of character which God's Spirit can alone produce. This is sanctification. It may exist in different degrees: it may be partial; it may be complete. Even when complete, it may, in this world, coexist with many

a "Holy, though His work in redeeming Israel seems to have come to nought, and His pretermission of human sin appears to militate against justice."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The Jews thought the glory of God should be confined to their land; but it is here intimated that in Gospel times the glory of God should fill all the earth, the glory of His holiness, which is indeed the glory of all His other attributes."—*Mat. Henry.*

c *E. B. Browning.*

a "The Prophet, appalled by the display which he saw of the Divine glory, the theme and loud peals of the seraphim, the concussions of the earthquake, and a sense of his own sinfulness, and that of his nation, apprehended instant destruction."—*Henderson.*

b "That he emphasises the unclean lips comes from the fact that he had just heard the seraphim bring an offer of praise

an error of judgment, and many a defect of temperament. Yet it enables us to live without offending God, so as to maintain for us the permanent, undiminished fulness of the Divine approbation. And when the heart is clean, the eye is clear. When purity makes us like God, then can we realise and see His countenance. The eye of the pure spirit beholds the pure Spirit. Through the beams He sheds down upon us, we can look up and see the face that shines. In the light of His smile, we behold His smile. So the pure in heart shall see God.[e]

6—8. (6) **live coal**, or *hot stone*, used to roast meat with. "Fire was the symbol of purification, bec. it takes the dross out of metals." **the altar**, either that of burnt-offering, or that of incense. (7) **my mouth**, *comp.* Je. i. 9.[a] **iniquity**, *etc.*, *i.e.* his conscious unworthiness to act as God's messenger: and perhaps his sinful shrinking back from work which seemed so hopeless. Comp. Jonah's sin in fleeing from the Lord. (8) **send me**, the expression of the obedient attitude to which Is. was brought.

A missionary spirit described (v. 8).—I. The proposal made referred to a mission which God intended to send to His people. II. The answer given. We should offer ourselves to serve Him—1. Instantly; 2. Without reserve. III. The peculiar obligation which lies on us to follow the Prophet's example. We may be considered as having—1. More glorious discoveries of Christ; 2. More abundant communications of the Spirit; 3. More certain assurances of the forgiveness of our sins.[b]

Promoters of missions.—There was a race of parents that could raise a race of missionaries. Let me give you an instance of an old Moravian woman. A friend called upon her with sadness in his looks. "Your son," said he to the mother, "is gone." "Is Thomas gone to heaven through the missionary life? Would to God that He would call my son John!" Well, John did become a missionary; and he fell. And this time the committee were very sad; but, before opening their lips, the old woman anticipated the story, and exclaimed, "Thank God! Would that He would call my last son, William!" And William, too, went, and fell: when the noble woman exclaimed, "Would that I had a thousand sons to give to God!" Oh! would that I had a thousand such mothers! Then would our ranks be full.[c]

9, 10. (9) **hear**, *etc.*, lit. in hearing hear. "Though ye hear the warnings again and again, ye are doomed, bec. of your perverse will, not to understand."[a] "Spiritual blindness is the punishment of the Jews for refusing to see, obduracy is their chastisement for hardening their heart."[b] Je. vii. 26. (10) **make**, *etc.*,[c] this would be the result of his preaching, but not the object he was to seek. God's judgment on His people was partly accomplished by the hardening results of the Prophet's preaching.[d]

Pitying the heathen.—In the whole history of the human family there is nothing that is better fitted to draw from our eyes tears of compassion, even yet, than those things that men are wont to laugh at. Is it but a poor and childish superstition that leads the Indian of the forest to go through his incantation? The incantation is poor enough, and childish enough; but the heart-ache which there is in the Indian's bosom is just as sublime

with clean lips."—*Nägelsbach.*

c Comp. Jno. i. 18; 1 Ti. vi. 16.

v. 5. W. Cradock, Wks.; Dr. J. Erskine, ii. 212.

d Etc in 400 Sks.

e Dr. Whedon.

a "The fire is applied to the lips for a twofold reason. 1. To show that the particular impediment of which the Prophet had complained was done away; and 2. To show that the gift of inspiration is included."—*J. A. Alexander.*

"Fire has primarily devouring, and thereby judging, purifying, and secondarily, warming, illuminating power."—*Nägelsbach.*

vv. 5—8. T. Scott, iv. 45.

vv. 6, 7. Bp. Andrews, 515.

v. 7. R. Morehead, i. 376.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

c Dr. Durbin.

a Fausset.

"The language is proverbial in its character, and savours strongly of sacred irony, of wh. we have a decided instance in Mat. xxiii. 32."—*Henderson.*

b Wordsworth.

c "Render them the more hardened by your warnings."—*Maurer.*

d "Forasmuch as

they would not be made better by his ministry, they should be made worse by it; those that were wilfully blind should be judicially blinded."—*Mat. Henry.*

"One must love Divine things in order to understand them."—*Jousel.*

c *H. W. Beecher.*

as it was in Socrates. Is it a sad and pitiful thing to see the heathen go down to the river, to the jungle, to the ideal temple, and pass through fires, or floods, or expiations? and are these things foolish, and utterly without power either to change the character or to appease an intelligent God? The thing may be imbecile, if you please; but the soul-want, the shadow of a great fear that rests upon these untaught children that have felt the power of moral government, but that do not know what that government is, nor the way to it—that is full of heroism even. None more than we can afford to throw away the superstitions; but none so much as we should pity those poor, thralled hearts, that are bound by superstition, and that know not where to find a Redeemer.c

a "However frequently the people may seem to be destroyed, there shall still be a surviving remnant, and however frequently that very remnant may appear to perish, there shall still be a remnant of the remnant left, and this indestructible residuum shall be the holy seed, the true Church."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b *Henderson.*

Job xiv. 7; Ezek. xi. 16.

c. 13. *E. Erskine*, ii. 182.

c *C. H. Spurgeon.*

"The historical matters of Scripture, both narrative and prophecy, constitute as it were the bones of its system; whereas the spiritual matters are as its muscles, blood-vessels and nerves. As the bones are necessary to the human system, so Scripture must have its historical matters. The expositor who nullifies the historical ground-work of Scripture for the sake of finding only spiritual

11—13. (11) how long? bec. Is. knew that God's times of judgment were but steps to times of salvation. until, *etc., i.e.* until it has utterly ruined the people, and driven them from their country. (12) far away, to Babylon; there was to be no permanent recovery until after the great captivity. (13) a tenth, a reserved, elect few.a Or perhaps the idea is, that so severe shall be the coming woe that if a few escape at first, they shall afterwards be consumed,b be eaten, or, be for burning. teil, or *terebinth.* substance, or sap, wh. remains through winter.

The leafless tree (*v.* 13).—Having explained the meaning of the passage, I shall make the application—I. To the Jews. II. To the Church of Christ. III. To each believer. 1. Men lose their leaves when they lose their comforts; 2. Some Christians lose their leaves, not by doubts, but by sin.c

Fulfilment of prophecy.—A public edict of the Emperor Adrian rendered it a capital crime for a Jew to set foot in Jerusalem, and prohibited them from viewing it even at a distance. Heathens, Christians, and Mohammedans have alternately possessed Judæa. It has been the prey of the Saracens; the descendants of Ishmael have often overrun it; the children of Israel have alone been denied the possession of it, though thither they ever wish to return; and though it forms the only spot on earth where the ordinances of their religion can be observed. And, amid all the revolutions of states, and the extinction of many nations, in so long a period the Jews alone have not only ever been aliens in the land of their fathers, but whenever any of them have been permitted, at any period since the time of their dispersion, to sojourn there, they have experienced even more contumelious treatment than elsewhere. Benjamin of Tudela, who travelled in the twelfth century through great part of Europe and of Asia, found the Jews everywhere oppressed, particularly in the Holy Land. And to this day (while the Jews who reside in Palestine, or who resort thither in old age, that their bones may not be laid in a foreign land, are alike ill-treated and abused by Greeks, Armenians, and Europeans) the haughty deportment of the despotic Turkish soldier, and the abject state of the poor and helpless Jews, are painted to the life by the Prophet. Though the cities be waste, and the land be desolate, it is not from the poverty of the soil that the fields are abandoned by the plough, nor from any diminution of its ancient and natural fertility that the land has rested for so many generations. Judæa was not forced only by artificial means, or from local and

temporary causes, into a luxuriant cultivation, such as a barren country might have been, concerning which it would not have needed a prophet to tell that, if once devastated and abandoned, it would ultimately and permanently revert into its original sterility. Phœnicia at all times held a far different rank among the richest countries of the world; and it was not a bleak and sterile portion of the earth, nor a land which even many ages of desolation and neglect could impoverish, that God gave in possession and by covenant to the seed of Abraham. No longer cultivated as a garden, but left like a wilderness, Judæa is indeed greatly changed from what it was. All that human ingenuity and labour did devise, erect, or cultivate, men have laid waste and desolate; all the "plenteous goods" with which it was enriched, adorned, and blessed, have fallen like seared and withered leaves, when their greenness is gone; and stripped of its "ancient splendour," it is left as an oak whose leaf fadeth: but its inherent sources of fertility are not dried up; the natural richness of the soil is unblighted; the substance is in it, strong as that of the teil tree or the solid oak, which retain their substance when they cast their leaves. And as the leafless oak waits throughout winter for the genial warmth of returning spring, to be clothed with renewed foliage, so the once glorious land of Judæa is yet full of latent vigour, or of vegetative power strong as ever, ready to shoot forth even "better than at the beginning," whenever the sun of heaven shall shine on it again, and the holy seed be prepared for being finally "the substance thereof." The substance that is in it—which alone has here to be proved—is, in few words, thus described by an enemy: "The land in the plains is fat and loamy, and exhibits every sign of the greatest fecundity. Were nature assisted by art, the fruits of the most distant countries might be produced within the distance of twenty leagues." "Galilee," says Malte Brun, "would be a paradise, were it inhabited by an industrious people, under an enlightened government. Vine stocks are to be seen here a foot and a half in diameter." [d]

truths everywhere, brings death on all correct interpretation."—*J. A. Bengel.*

"It has been subjected, along with many other books, to the fire of the keenest investigation,—a fire which has contemptuously burned up the cosmogony of the Shaster, the absurd fables of the Koran, nay, the husbandry of the Georgics, the historical truth of Livy, the artistic merit of many a popular poem, the authority of many a book of philosophy and science. And yet there this artless, loosely-piled book lies unhurt, untouched, with not one page singed; and not even the smell of fire has passed upon it."—*G. Gilfillan.*

d *Keith.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1, 2. (1) Ahaz, 2 Ki. xvi. 5. Rezin, this name is found in the Assyrian inscriptions as that of a king of Damascus, and tributary of Tiglath-Pileser. went up toward, for the earlier part of this war, comp. 2 Ki. xv. 37; 2 Chr. xxviii. could not prevail, for what reason does not appear. Poss. bec. they feared the power of Assyria, wh. Ahaz had invoked.[a] (2) house of David, so named bec. the heir of special promises, wh. gave assurance of Div. protection. confederate with, or resteth on.[b] Ephraim, a similar designation to that of Judah. moved, with the confusion of their fear.

Godly fear.—There is a fear—that of falling from God—of which we ought never in this world to divest ourselves. It is the guard of our piety; and hence it is said, "Blessed is the man that feareth alway." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Our present condition, whatever may be our spiritual attainments, is not one of absolute safety, and therefore is not one of perfect enjoyment. "I fast," says the apostle, "and

a "Ahaz had applied to the king of Assyria, and the news that the latter was in motion in response to the request of Ahaz, moved the allied kings to hasten home into their countries."—*Näegelsbach.*

b "Hitherto the northern kingdom had for the most part acted as a barrier between Syria and Judah. Now Syria had gained

Israel over, and could use Samaria as a base of operations against Judah.' —*Spk. Com.*

‡ *E. Watson.*

keep my body under, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." "Pass, then, the time of your sojourning here in fear." Who, indeed, can but fear, when his immortal spirit is trembling between heaven and hell? The word of Divine grace is often compared to seed sown in the earth. To how many hazards is it exposed before it is rooted in the ground! And after it has sprung up, and "the valleys stand thick with corn," when can we say it is safe? Our fears are not entirely removed till the wheat is gathered into the garner.[c]

3, 4. (3) Shear-jashub, meaning, *a remnant shall return.* Isa.'s sons were used as signs. The presence of this son was a call to penitence. end . . pool, the prob. ref. is to a pool 700 yards from the Jaffa gate, and from it an aqueduct led the water into the city.[a] highway, or causeway beside the aqueduct. fuller's field, or bleaching ground for clothes washed in the pool. (4) be quiet, cease from your schemes about securing the water. Also be quiet, and do not seek help from Assyria. two tails, *etc.*, referring to the mischief the firebrands had done, but which had come to an end.[b]

Fear not.—Fear not—I. For thyself. I will wash thee thoroughly from thine iniquities. I will console thee in trouble. I will be with thee in the dark valley. II. For any among thy kindred and acquaintance of the same family of God. There is a shield over the head of each. III. Amid changes however startling; circumstances however unexpected. I am the perfect Ruler of a perfect providence.

Groundless fear.—It was wise advice of Sydney Smith, when he said that those who desire to go hopefully and cheerfully through their work in this life, should "take short views:" not plan too far ahead; take the present blessing, and be thankful for it. It was indeed the best of all possible advice: for it was but a repetition, in another form, of the counsel of the kindest and wisest: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Whenever I see man or woman, early old with anxiety, and with a face deeply lined with care, I think of certain words which deserve infinitely better than to be printed in letters of gold; and I wish that such a one, and that all I care for, were numbered among the people who have a right to take these words for their own: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

5, 6. (5) evil counsel, planning a mischievous design. Their secret scheme Isaiah, by prophetic power, discloses to Ahaz.[a] (6) vex it, strike horror into it: harass it. make a breach, or take by storm. set a king, a creature of their own, whose policy they might control. son of Tabeal, this person is unknown, but the name is a Syriac one, and not a Hebrew, indicating that the man was a foreigner. Some suggest that he was a descendant of Naaman.

Injurious influence of fear.—Anxiety tells on the health, causes sleepless nights, wears the nerves—so shortens life. Once, says the legend, the plague was in a certain Eastern city, and 20,000

‡ *Robinson* and *Smith* identify with a large tank at the head of the valley of Hinnom. It is full in the rainy season, and its waters are then conducted by a small rude aqueduct, which is the *conduit* mentioned.

"Ahaz was superintending the works for defence, and the cutting off of the water supply from the enemy and securing it to the city."—*Fausset.*

b "The hot fire of their anger was now turned to smoke and almost quenched."—*J. A. Alexander.*

vv. 3–5. *Dr. T. Chalmers*, vi. 422.

"A little fire is quickly trodden out: which being suffered, rivers cannot quench."—*Shakespeare.*

c "The objects at which the confederates aimed were the entire destruction of the house of David, and the placing of a foreigner upon the throne."—*Henderson.*

vv. 5, 6. *C. Bulkley*, ii. 37; *T. Bradbury*, i. 173.

people died. A man going in through the gates met the plague coming out. "Ah," said the man, "I hear you have killed 20,000 people." "No," said the plague, "I have only killed 10,000 ; fear killed the rest."

7—9. (7) **Lord God,** or Lord Jehovah, who will keep His covenant. **not stand,** not even get a practical shape, or the promise of success. (8) **head of,** or the capital of. The Prophet means that things shall remain as they are in Syria ; the contemplated changes shall not be accomplished.[a] **broken,** from being a people ; so as to be no longer a distinct nation.[b] (9) **head,** *etc.*, *i.e.* there shall not be the change of capital or king wh. you fear, and your enemies plan. **if . . established,** better rend. "Be firm in faith, or ye will not be made firm in fact :"[c] or "If ye will not *confide* ye shall not *abide*."

The sin of unbelief (*v.* 9).—The sin of unbelief may be called the white devil. It is that sin, above all others—1. That hath some show of reason in its attempts ; for it keeps the soul from Christ by pretending its present unfitness and unpreparedness ; 2. It most suiteth with the conscience, which tells the sinner that he hath nothing good ; 3. It most suiteth with the wisdom of the flesh, which thinks it prudent not to be too rash and presuming upon Jesus Christ ; 4. It is continually whispering in the soul's ear mistrusts of the faithfulness of God, and of the willingness of Christ to save ; 5. It is always at hand to enter an objection to the promises, which by the Spirit of God are brought to the heart to comfort us.[d]

Unbelief.—Whence proceed sterility and unfruitfulness in the knowledge of Christ? St. Peter ascribes them all to an habitual unbelief. Such persons, he says, "have forgotten that they were purged from their former sins." In the regenerate, where it remains, it is very detrimental ; for, "they that will not believe shall not be established." In the unregenerate, where it prevails, it is absolutely destructive ; and although it may not kill like an apoplexy, it wastes like a consumption. "They could not enter in because of unbelief."[e]

10—12. (10) **spake again,** or added to speak again, so as to give Ahaz further assurance. (11) **a sign,** some miraculous event that may impress on you the Div. power to fulfil Div. promises.[a] **depth . . height,** either on the earth, or in the heavens : or the term may be used indefinitely, *anywhere*. (12) **tempt,** in the sense of *put to the test*.[b] "Ahaz hypocritically pretends that there is no necessity for Divine interference, and professes to regard as sin what God had graciously accorded to him."[c] "He rudely refuses this gracious offer, and kicks at the courtesy."[d]

A new thing in the earth (*vv.* 10—16).—I. The pledge proposed. 1. Observe the condescension which God displayed on this occasion : 2. There is a semblance of regard for the honour of God, while the heart is in a state of hostility towards Him ; 3. That God may sustain a certain relation to those who are not His in reality. II. The indignant rebuke administered. 1. The persons to whom it was addressed ; 2. The feeling by which it was prompted ; 3. The grounds on which it rested. III. The glorious result predicted. The particulars set before us are—1. The miraculous conception of Christ ; 2. The essential Deity of

a "They should neither of them (Syria nor Israel) enlarge their dominions, nor push their conquests any farther. They shall be made to know their own ; their bounds are fixed, and they shall not pass them." —*Mat. Henry.*

b 2 Ki. xvii. 1—6.

c "God's faithfulness is as the strong mountains ; if ye would be strong, ye must plant your feet on His promise." —*Spk. Com.*

d J. Bunyan.

e Hervey.

a A present visible pledge of the certainty of something invisible or future.

b De. vi. 16.

c Henderson.

d "As if it would be a tempting of God to do that wh. God Himself invited and directed him to do." —*Mat. Henry.*

v. 10. *J. Fisher*, 209.

vv. 10—14. *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kgs.* 230 ; *Dr. M. Hill*, iii. 401 ; *Lp. Medley*, 205.

v. 11. *M. Cowie, Huls. Lec.* 129.

e *Bp. Hall.*

"Who seeks, and will not take when once 'tis offered, shall never find it more." — *Shakespeare.*

Christ; 3. The design of the coming of Christ; 4. The lowly condition of Christ; 5. The moral purity of Christ.

Hypocrisy an imitation.—Art imitates nature, and the nearer it comes to nature in its effects, it is the more excellent. Grace is the new nature of a Christian, and hypocrisy that art that counterfeits it: and the more exquisite it is in imitation, it is the more plausible to men, but the more abominable to God. It may frame a spiritual man in image so to the life, that not only others, but even the hypocrite himself, may admire it, and, favouring his own artifice, may be deceived so far as to say and to think it lives, and fall in love with it: but he is no less abhorred by the Searcher of hearts than pleasing to himself.[e]

13, 14. (13) house of Dav., represented by this their wilful king. Isa. turns from him to the people of the covenant. weary men, such as the Prophet. my God, who has now sent so gracious a message and offer. (14) shall give, choosing for Himself what it shall be. sign, the prediction of what shall seem to be impossible, but shall nevertheless come true.[a] Immanuel, *God with us.*[b] Reference must be to some well-known person, then a virgin, but about to be married. The fuller reference is to the Messiah. Events for the nation are fixed by the stages of the child's growth.

Union of the Divine and human in Christ.—"And they shall call His name Immanuel," etc. By a wonderful and unsearchable union: the manner whereof is to be believed, not discussed; admired, not pried into: personal it is, yet not of persons: of natures, and yet not natural. As a soul and body are one man, so God and man are one person, saith Athanasius. And as every believer that is born of God, saith another, remains the same entire person that he was before, receiving nevertheless into him a Divine nature, which before he had not: so Immanuel, continuing the same perfect person which He had been from eternity, assumeth nevertheless a human nature, which before He had not, to be borne within His person for ever. Thus in the pride of a procession, He paused to weep over ruined Jerusalem. And if we ask the reason why the character of Christ was marked by this melancholy condescension, it is that He was in the midst of a world of ruins, and there was nothing there to gladden, but very much to touch with grief. He was here to restore that which was broken down and crumbling into decay. An enthusiastic antiquarian, standing amidst the fragments of an ancient temple, surrounded by dust and moss, broken pillar, and defaced architrave, with magnificent projects in his mind of restoring all this to former majesty, to draw out to light from mere rubbish the ruined glories, and therefore stooping down amongst the dank ivy, and the rank nettles; such was Christ amidst the wreck of human nature. He was striving to lift it out of its degradation. He was searching out in revolting places that which had fallen down, that He might build it up again in fair proportions, a holy temple to the Lord. Therefore He laboured among the guilty: therefore He was the companion of outcasts; therefore He spoke tenderly and lovingly to those whom society counted undone: therefore He loved to bind up the bruised and the broken-hearted; therefore His breath fanned the spark which seemed dying out in the wick of the expiring taper, when men thought that it was too late, and that the hour of hopeless profli-

a "The Prophet renews the promise of deliverance, and connects it with the birth of a child, whose significant name is made a symbol of the Div. interposition, and his progress a measure of subsequent events."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Mat. i. 22, 23.

v. 14. *Dr. J. Donne,* i. 21; *Bp. M. Smith,* 45; *Bossuet,* xxii. 265; *Dr. W. Harris,* 275; *Dr. L. Twells, Boyle Lec.* ii. 1; *J. Newton,* iv. 55; *Dr. R. Gordon,* iii. 78.

"As the rainbow looks the brighter, the blacker the cloud it spans, the majesty of Christ's claim to Divinity is brought out by the meanness of the circumstances in which it was made."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

Christ was a king in disguise; and no being ever walked less known than He. And now, although some eighteen hundred years have been turned in scrutiny upon Him, He is still but little known.

gacy was come. It was that feature in His character, that tender, hoping, encouraging spirit of His, which the Prophet Isaiah fixed upon as characteristic—"A bruised reed will He not break." It was an illustration of this spirit that He gave in the parable of the prodigal son.[c]

c *F. W. Robertson.*

15, 16. (15) **butter and honey,** curdled milk and honey was the food for infants.[a] In *v.* 23 these things, as food for the people, imply a state of distress, when the people have to depend on *spontaneous* products. **that . . know,** or until he shall know, *i.e.* until he shall be some three years old. (16) **before,** *etc., i.e.* within three years. **forsaken,** some think this refers to Rezin and Pekah: others to the land of Canaan and the kings of Judah and Israel, and these connect the fulfilment with the times of Messiah.[b]

Butter and honey.—Honey and milk are often spoken of in the Old Testament as emblems of plenty, and in verse 22 the Prophet intimates that those who survived the desolation of the land should still partake of its abundance. D'Arvieux, visiting the camp of the Grand Emir, was treated with great consideration. The Arab prince lived in splendour, and on the first morning treated his guest with little loaves, honey, new-churned butter, and loaves of cream, more delicate than any he ever saw, together with coffee. In another passage the same writer assures us that one of the principal things with which the Arabs regale themselves at breakfast is cream, or new butter mingled with honey; a mixture, he observes, which seems odd, but which experience proves not to be bad. He further adds that butter and honey is an exquisite breakfast among the Arabs, and presented by princes to those they would honour with great distinction. In reading this and similar passages, we commonly suppose that they were eaten separately; the Arab usage, however, of mixing butter and honey together when entertaining their friends is of ancient date, and is doubtless that to which the Prophet refers.

a "Physicians directed that the first food given to a child should be honey, the next milk."—*Fiusset.*

b "When our Lord was twelve years old Archelaus was banished and Judæa reduced to a Romish province."—*Henderson.*

2 Ki. xv. 30, xvi. 9.

"As the Dead Sea drinks in the Jordan, and is never the sweeter, so we are apt to receive daily mercies from God, and yet remain insensible of them, and unthankful for them."—*Reynolds.*

17—19. (17) **king of Assyria,**[a] Ahaz was seeking for his help, the Prophet says he would become the worst foe to the nation. (18) **fly,** the symbol of Egypt, wh. abounds in flies. **bee,** symbol of Assyria.[b] Sometimes Judah inclined to lean on Egypt, and sometimes on Assyria; both at last helped to accomplish her destruction. **rest . . bushes,** overspreading the land, and settling down in it. **thorns,** prickly lotus.[c] **bushes,** or trees that were objects of care and culture.

Note on v. 18.—Some writers have contended that bees are destitute of the sense of hearing; but their opinion is entirely without foundation. This will appear, if any proof were necessary, from the following prediction: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt; and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria." The allusion which this text involves, is the practice of calling out the bees from their hives, by a hissing or whistling sound, to their labour in the fields, and summoning them again to return, when the heavens begin to lower, or the shadows of evening to fall. In this manner, Jehovah threatens to rouse the enemies of Judah, and lead them to the prey. However widely scattered, or far remote from the scene of action, they should hear His voice, and with as much promptitude as the

a "The kings of Babylon are reckoned among the kings of Assyria, and are designated as such, as being their successors and representatives."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Bee-keeping is an established trade in Assyria to the present day."—*Spk. Com.*

The Assyrians may also be likened to bees, on account of the order, discipline, and energy of their forces.

c "Palestine, fr. the combined heat and dryness of its climate, and the rockiness

of its surface, has a peculiar tendency to form thorns even in groups where we should least expect them."—*Tristram.*

"The animals are worried almost to death by the countless flies, especially by that species wh. drives the camels from the country. This peculiar fly is about the size of a wasp, with an orange-coloured body, with black and white rings; the proboscis is terrific, double, and appears to be disproportioned, being two-thirds the length of the entire insect. When this fly attacks an animal, or man, it pierces the skin instantaneously, like the prick of a red-hot needle driven deep into the flesh; at the same time the insect exerts every muscle of its body by buzzing with its wings, as it buries the instrument to its greatest depth; the blood starts from the wound immediately, and continues to flow for a considerable time. This is an attraction to other flies in great numbers, many of which would lay their eggs upon the wound."—*Sir S. Baker.*

hee, that has been taught to recognise the signal of its owner, and obey his call, they should assemble their forces; and although weak and insignificant as a swarm of bees in the estimation of a proud and infatuated people, they should come with irresistible might, and take possession of the rich and beautiful region which had been abandoned by its terrified inhabitants. This insect is called Zimb; it has not been described by any naturalist. It is, in size, very little larger than a bee, of a thicker proportion, and his wings, which are broader than those of a bee, placed separate, like those of a fly: they are of pure gauze, without colour or spot upon them; the head is large, the upper jaw or lip is sharp, and has at the end of it a strong pointed hair, of about a quarter of an inch long; the lower jaw has two of these pointed hairs; and this pencil of hairs, when joined together, makes a resistance to the finger, nearly equal to that of a strong hog's bristle: its legs are serrated in the inside, and the whole covered with brown hair or down. As soon as this plague appears, and their buzzing is heard, all the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about the plain till they die, worn out with fatigue, fright, and hunger. No remedy remains but to leave the black earth and hasten down to the sands of Atbara; and there they remain while the rains last, this cruel enemy never daring to pursue them farther. Though his size be immense, as is his strength, and his body covered with a thick skin, defended with strong hair, yet even the camel is not capable to sustain the violent punctures the fly makes with his pointed proboscis. He must lose no time in removing to the sands of Atbara: for when once attacked by this fly, his body, head, and legs break out into large bosses, which swell, break, and putrefy, to the certain destruction of the creature. Even the elephant and rhinoceros, who, by reason of their enormous bulk, and the vast quantity of food and water they daily need, cannot shift to desert and dry places, as the season may require, are obliged to roll themselves in mud and mire, which, when dry, coats them over like armour, and enables them to stand their ground against this winged assassin: yet I have found some of these tubercles upon almost every elephant and rhinoceros that I have seen, and attribute them to this cause. All the inhabitants of the sea-coast of Melinda, down to Cape Gardefan, to Saba, and the south coast of the Red Sea, are obliged to put themselves in motion and remove to the next sand, in the beginning of the rainy season, to prevent all their stock of cattle from being destroyed. This is not a partial emigration; the inhabitants of all the countries, from the mountains of Abyssinia northward to the confluence of the Nile and Astaboras, are once a year obliged to change their abode, and seek protection on the sands of Beja; nor is there any alternative, or means of avoiding this, though a hostile band were in their way, capable of spoiling them of half their substance. This fly has no sting, though he seems to me to be rather of the bee kind; but his motion is more rapid and sudden than that of the bee, and resembles that of the gadfly in England. There is something particular in the sound or buzzing of this insect; it is a jarring noise, together with a humming, which induces me to believe it proceeds, at least in part, from a vibration made with the three hairs at his snout.

v. 20. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 571

20—22. (20) razor, *etc.*, *i.e.* with the razor that Ahaz now

resolves to hire. **beyond the river**, the Euphrates. **head .. beard**, a strong figure for the manner in which Assyria would desolate the country and sweep away all its treasure. The Easterns consider the removal of the hair is ignominious. (21) **that day**, of spoliation and desolation. **nourish .. sheep**, this would be all spared to a man out of his large flocks. The fig. indicates that agriculture would cease, and the land become one great pasture-ground. **abundance**, through having such a wide range for feeding in. **butter and honey**, spontaneous products. There would be no grain, or herbs, the products of agriculture.[a]

Shaving.—By reading what is written on 2 Kings ii. 23, a better view will be gained of the contempt attached to those who were bald, and of the term as being expressive of the most complete weakness and destitution. To tell a man that you will shave him is as much as to say you will ruin him—entirely overthrow him. "Our king has shaved all his enemies," means, he has punished them; reduced them to the most abject condition, so that they have not a single vestige of power in their possession. "What, fellow! didst thou say thou wouldst shave me?" "I will give thy bones to the crows and the jackals. Begone, bald-head, get out of my way." The punishment to be inflicted on the Jews was very great: they were to be shaved on the head, the beard, and "the hair of the feet." The latter expression alludes to a most disgusting practice, common in all parts of the East. Calmet says, "The Hebrews modestly express by feet those parts which decency forbids to name: 'the water of the feet;' 'to cover the feet;' 'the hair of the feet.'" Thus the Lord was about to shave the Jews by a razor which they themselves had hired![b]

23—25. (23) **thousand vines**, a spot therefore of careful and anxious culturing. **silverlings**, pieces or shekels of silver. (24) **with arrows**, *etc., i.e.* seeking wild animals in these once cultured gardens. (25) **mattock**, or hoe. **there shall not**, better, thou shalt not go even there, for fear of the thorns.[a] "The hills of Judæa were anciently cultivated to the very top:" they were to become mere ranges for the cattle; "only cattle would be able to penetrate the briery ground."

The mattock.—These words embody the opinion that the slopes and brows of the hills, which had, by the industry of man, been reduced to a state of cultivation, should again relapse into their natural wildness, the thorns and briers should be allowed to resume their ancient empire, the beasts of the chase should again lodge in the thickets, and the sheep and the ox feed in the grassy labyrinths between them, as in times of old. The instruments used by the Chinese are something between a hoe and a mattock, in that they have the breadth of one and the weight of the other. If the soil requires to be broken up in any place, whether the ground be soft or hard, clear or filled with the roots of shrubs, the mattock becomes indispensable. If a cornfield is to be cleansed of its weeds, and its soil reduced to a more equable condition of density or compactness, the same implement is put in use. It discharges the threefold office of spade, mattock, and hoe. There is great propriety in thus joining the mattock with the cultivation of the hills, because a spade would not suit the general hardness of the ground, nor serve to uproot the stubs

[a] "Instead of living on the fruits of the soil, they shall subsist upon spontaneous products, such as milk and honey, wh. shall be abundant only because the people will be few, and the uncultivated grounds extensive."—*J. A. Alexander.*

"He that swells in prosperity will be sure to shrink in adversity."—*Colton.*

"Prosperity is often an equivocal word denoting merely affluence of possession."—*Blair.*

[b] *Roberts.*

[a] "None shall come who fear thorns, seeing that thorns shall abound on all sides."—*Maurer.*

"Thou shalt not come for fear of thorns."—*Gesenius.*

"The verse continues and completes the description of the general desolation, as manifested first by the people's living upon milk and honey, then by the growth of thorns and briers in the choicest vineyards and the terraced hills, and by the conversion of these carefully-tilled spots into dangerous solitudes, hunting grounds, and pastures."—*J. A. Alexander.*

"The frost is seldom quite out of the earth till the sun hath got some power in the spring to dissolve its bands; neither will hardness of heart be removed until the soul is thoroughly warmed with the sense of God's mercies." — *Gurnall.*

"Perhaps in no trade has the division of labour been successfully carried to so great an extent as in that of watch-making. In an examination before a Committee of the House of Commons, it was stated that there are a hundred and two distinct branches of this art, to each of which a boy may be apprenticed." — *G. Poulett Scrope.*

which time had left in the soil. It is the plough in its rudimentary form—the first step that was taken to render the spade more efficient, and quicker in its execution. The beam and the share, with the upright into which the latter was fastened, are there. And this share is exhibited under the guise of a spade. The knees, or cross-pieces, which secure the upright in its position, indicate that great force or resistance was applied to the spade; otherwise such a provision would not have been necessary. In what way it was used does not appear evident at first sight; but attention to circumstances, and conjecture, may help us to a right conclusion. It is obvious that it was not drawn by a buffalo; man must then have fulfilled that laborious duty himself. Two men, it is probable, attached the end of the beam to their bodies, and endeavoured to strengthen the force of that attachment by laying hold with their hands. One walked before, and so corresponded in position with the buffalo. The other followed behind, and discharged the function of ploughman, by resting one or both of his hands upon the top of his spade. An opportunity may hereafter be afforded for studying these aborigines, and some traveller may chance to cross a field where man is doing the drudgery of the patient ox. By considering the circumstances now detailed, and reflecting on the lesson they suggest, we seem to have the pedigree of the plough before us in detail. First the mattock, by which the fallow ground was broken up and rendered fit for cultivation. Secondly, the spade, with which the sons of labour turned over the lighter kinds of soil in the course of tillage. Thirdly, the spade fastened in a frame, whereby two men could stir up more soil than ten without this device. And, fourthly, the annexation of a handle at one end of this frame, and the yoking of an ox or buffalo at the other. The addition of the coulter, and the metallic winding surface continuous with the share, constitutes the fifth and last finish to this useful instrument. The wheels, with which it is furnished in some counties, neither add to nor diminish from the integrity of the plough.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1, 2. (1) great roll, wh. would serve as a public placard, to be read by all. It was not a book-roll, but a *tablet*, either of wood, stone, or metal.[a] The writing was either traced on a waxed surface, or graven in the substance. man's pen,[b] an ordinary *style*. The Prophet was to write in so plain a way that the humblest might understand. Maher-shalal-hash-baz, these words were to be the writing on the tablet, and they mean, *Thunder speedeth, spoil hasteth*.[c] This writing kept the Divine message before the people until the child was born and named. (2) faithful, sure, or trustworthy. It seems that they were adherents of Ahaz.[d]

The roll of Inspired Truth (*vv.* 1—4).—I. Its certainty: written by command of God, sufficiently attested, confirmed by signs and wonders, will be ultimately fulfilled. II. Its use: for the comfort and instruction of God's people, for the warning and admonition of His enemies.[e]

The names of writing materials and their origins.—Amongst

[a] The laws of Solon were inscribed on tablets of wood.
"Among the ancients stone, brass, lead, wood, and the like, were employed when the design was to promulgate public decrees, or record memorable events for posterity." — *Henderson.*
[b] Heb. *enosh*, wh. means a *common man* as contrasted with the *upper ranks.*
[c] "The spoil (*i.e.* the spoiler) hastens, the ra-

the materials upon which the ancient Scriptures were written, were skins—tanned, or dyed red or yellow. These were not bound by the edge, but so fastened together as to form one continuous roll: hence the word volume, from Lat. *volumen* = a roll. Some were written on prepared skins called parchments, so called from Pergamos, the place where parchment was first made. "Sometimes tables of wood[g] or stone, called caudices, or codices, were employed: hence the term codex (Lat. = tablet) came to be applied to a manuscript on any material;" and hence also a system of laws was called a code, because the use of such tables was once frequent for legal purposes, where durability was important. "These tables were written on in their natural state (or, when used for temporary purposes, covered with wax) with an iron needle (Job xix. 24) called a *stylus*:" hence we have the term style, now applied to the character of the composition.

3, 4. (3) **prophetess,** only called such as being Isaiah's wife: comp. He. i. 2—9. She may be the person referred to in ch. vii. 14. (4) **to cry, my father,** *i.e.* before he should be able to talk: within some two years.[a] **spoil . . Assyria,** "an allusion to the ancient custom of carrying in triumph before the victor the spoils taken from the enemy."

A great Name.—What a thought it is, that One Name should cover all names; that One Name should signify more than all names! As all things which are named came from one God, there must be a far greater fulness of meaning in His single name than in all the names put together of all the creatures and things in heaven and earth. The earth, and all that is in it; the firmament, with all the stars; the heavens, with all the angels,—are contained in God; but they do not contain God. Nothing is easier than to say the word "universe;" and yet it would take us millions and millions of years to bestow one hasty glance upon the surface of that small portion of it which lies within the range of our glasses. But what are all suns, comets, earths, moons, atmospheres, seas, rivers, mountains, valleys, plains, woods, cattle, with beasts, fish, fowl, grasses, plants, shrubs, trees, minerals, and metals, compared with the meaning of the one name God! We are learning here under these heavens, from the heavens and from the earth, what that Name is, from whom all things, named and unnamed, came. After death,—our emancipated souls, our new eyes, our new friends, and the new scenery, helping us,—we shall commence anew the study of that Name. And to all eternity, all that we shall ever see and hear will only help us to a more humbling, worshipful appreciation of the incomprehensibility of that Name.[b]

5—8. (5) **spake,** or added to speak. (6) **waters of Shiloah,** or Siloam, on the S. side of Jerusalem:[a] symbol of the humble power of the Jewish kingdom, in outward appearance. **go softly,** quietly, making no noise in their beneficent flowing. **rejoice . . son,** this evidently refers to a party in Jerusalem that traitorously favoured the Syrian schemes, and the pretensions of the "Son of Tabeal." (7) **the river,** the Euphrates, symbol of the Assyrian power.[b] "From the Euphrates shall mighty floods of water overflow first Ephraim and then Judah. (8) **the neck,** not going right over the head. Jerusalem was not at first to be destroyed, comp. ch. xxx. 29. **wings,** a fig. of

pine speeds forward."—*Maurer.* "They (the Assyrians) hasten to the spoil (*i.e.* to spoil Syria and Samaria), they speed to the prey."—*Gesenius.*

d 2 Ki xvi. 10—16; 2 Chr. xxix. 1.
e Dr. Lyth.
f Isa. viii. 1; Jer. xxxvi. 2; Zech. v. 1.
g Exod. xxxii. 15; Deut. vi. 9; Isa. xxx. 8; Hab. ii. 2; Luke i. 63; 2 Cor. iii. 3.

a "Pekah was assassinated in the fourth year of Ahaz, and Tiglath-Pileser's invasion of Damascus belongs prob. to the early part of the fourth of Ahaz."—*Spk. Com.* 2 Ki. xvi. 9, xvii. 5, 6.

"Brutus and Cæsar: what should be in Cæsar? Why should that name be sounded more than yours? Write them together, yours is as fair a name; sound them, it doth become the mouth as well; weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure them, Brutus will start as soon as Cæsar."—*Shakespeare.*

b Dr. Pulsford.

a "The fountain of Siloam, in its name, and in its mysterious subterranean derivations and flowings forth, was a remarkable figure of *Christ*, the Incarnate Word, the fountain of living waters."—*Wordsworth.*

"The only perennial fountain of Jerusalem, here used as a symbol of the Divine protection."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b "The Euphrates overflows its banks in spring and summer, after the snows of Armenia begin to melt. The armies of Assyria should now in like manner overflow their usual boundaries."—*Syk. Com.*

2 Ki. xviii. 9—16.

vv. 5—14. *J. Alting, Op. II.* par. ii. 43.

c Dr. Thomas.

"Our opportunities to do good are our talents."—*Dr. C. Mather.*

d Burder.

a "The world power must shiver on the rock of Israel, for it is thereby the strong rock in that God is with it."—*Nägelsbach.*

"The position before us is, that we ourselves, and such as we, are the very persons whom Scripture speaks of, and to whom, as men, in every variety of persuasive form, it makes its condescending though celestial appeal. The point worthy of observation is, to note how a book of the description and the compass which we have represented Scripture to be, possesses this versa-

the spreading armies which would cover and desolate all the land.

Mercy and judgment (*vv.* 6—8).—We deduce the following truths. I. That the mercies of our present life flow softly, as by a gentle stream. They flow—1. Vivifyingly; 2. Constantly; 3. Softly. II. That the abuse of the stream of mercies is an immense crime. Here is—1. Rejection; 2. Presumption. III. That this crime will bring on the tumultuous river of retribution. 1. The abuse of mercy leads to retributive misery; 2. The streams of retributive misery stand in awful contrast with those of mercy.*c*

The village of Siloah.—The valley is the southern entrance to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and derives its name from having the village and fountain on its opposite sides, and from its receiving the waters of the latter. The village is situated at the base of the Mount of Olives, and consists of about sixty poor dwellings, scarcely distinguishable from the surrounding tombs. "So rich and full of interest," says a traveller, "is the walk round Mount Zion, down to the brook Kidron, the village of Siloam, to the garden of Gethsemane, and from thence up the Mount of Olives, that we cannot look upon it without delight and heartfelt admiration." The gentle waters of Shiloah, a small fountain and brook just without Jerusalem, which supplied a pool within the city for the use of the inhabitants, are an apt emblem of the state of the kingdom and house of David, much reduced in its apparent strength, yet supported by the blessing of God; and are finely contrasted with the waters of the Euphrates, great, rapid, and impetuous; the image of the Babylonian empire, which God threatens to bring down like a mighty flood upon all these apostates of both kingdoms, as a punishment for their manifold iniquities.*d*

9, 10. (9) associate yourselves, *i.e.* raise tumults, rage, raise the war-cry, plan, do your worst. Addressed to the confederates, Israel and Syria, and their party within Jerusalem. broken, *etc.*, your schemes miserably failing. gird yourselves, *i.e.* arm and equip yourselves. (10) come to nought, be Divinely frustrated. God is with us, the name Immanuel, wh. Isaiah fixes on the land (ch. vii. 14).*a*

The slave mother crossing the Ohio.—We remember, says a writer in *The True American*, the story of a cruel master, who, without cause, had determined to sever a slave mother and her only child. She had been faithful under the very worst usage, and she determined to remain so, until he told her that on the morrow her child must be borne to New Orleans to be sold there in the slave mart. It was mid-winter. The earth was frosted with a hard crust, yet at midnight she started for the Ohio, determined, if she could, to live and die with her child. She reached its banks as the pursuers rose on the hill behind; no boat was near—masses of broken ice were sluggishly drifting along—what was she to do? Trusting to heaven, she put her feet on the treacherous element, and with it bending and breaking beneath her (spectators on either side expecting to see her and her child sink at every moment), she boldly pushed on from cake to cake, until she landed safely on the Ohio shore. Five minutes sooner and she must have perished—two minutes later and she would have met with a watery grave, for before she had proceeded

twenty steps, the ice behind her, close on the Kentucky side, had broken and was scattered ere she reached the mid-river. "Thank God you and your child are safe," exclaimed the hard-hearted master, as he saw her land, rejoiced that he had escaped the responsibility of their death. "Brave woman," said a Kentuckian who had witnessed her escape and met her at the landing, "you have won your freedom and shall have it." The mother and the child were kept together, and liberty and love is now their lot in their humble but happy home. Was there not true heroism here, and is not the scene worthy the sweetest song of poetry, or the holiest praise of man?

11, 12. (11) **strong hand,**[a] or by a mighty impulse. An unusual force and importance attached to this revelation. **not . . people,** *i.e.* not follow the example of the unbelieving Jews. (12) **confederacy,** or conspiracy; treason. Referring to factious combinations among the Jews themselves. Isaiah was in sense to be mixed up with them.[b] **be afraid,** better, **nor make** others be afraid.

Divine communications (*vv.* 11—16).—Observe—I. God's method of teaching His servants: He inspires, instructs, directs. II. The commission: there must be no confederacy with His foes; no fear, but implicit trust and confidence in God. III. The promise. IV. The threatening. V. The confirmation.[c]

Comfort in tribulation.—There is an island in a distant sea, from whose shores the fishermen sail in tiny crafts to procure the treasures of the deep. During their absence thick mists often descend and cover highland, cliff, and beacon with so thick a veil, that these hardy mariners are left without a mark by which to steer their laden barques. But in these dull hours they are not left to wander, unguided, on the pathless sea. When the time for their return arrives, the women of the islet—mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters—descend to the shores and raise the voice of song. Borne on the quiet air, their voices soon fall sweetly on the ears of the loved ones on the sea. Guided by the well-known sounds, they steer their boats in safety to the shore. And thus to thee, O Christian, comes the voice of love from the celestial shore, as thou wanderest, a bewildered child of tribulation, on the misty sea of life. Hearken! "Be of good cheer!" is the cry that greets thee. It comes from Jesus, who has overcome this world, which is the scene and source of your trials. His conquest of your adversary is the pledge of your victory. Therefore, "be of good cheer!"

13—15. (13) **sanctify,**[a] by fully relying upon Him. Honour Him by perfect trust. **him . . fear,** *i.e.* Him alone. (14) **sanctuary,** or defence in the evil time. **stone,** *etc.*, Lu. ii. 34; Ro. ix. 33; 1 Pe. ii. 7. **gin,** or trap. (15) **stumble,** *etc.*, figures taken from the means used in catching wild animals.

Stone of stumbling.—The idea appears to be taken from a stone, or a block of wood, being thrown in the path of travellers, over which they fall. "Well, friend, did the king grant you your request?" "No, no; there was a *Udaru-katti* (from the verb *udarukuthu*, to stumble, and *katti*, a block), a stumbling-block, in the way." "Just as Valen was attaining the object of his wishes, that old stumbling-block, the Modeliar, lay down in the way, and the poor fellow stumbled, and fell." "Why are you so

tility of power; this eye, like that of a portrait, uniformly fixed upon us, turn where we will."—*Müller*

a Eze. i. 3, iii. 22, xxxiii. 32, xxxvii. 1; comp. Eze. iii. 14.

b "Do not join with those that, for the securing of themselves, are for making a league with the Assyrians, thro' unbelief and distrust of God and their cause."—*Mat. Henry.*

Je. i. 17—19.

v. 12. *M. Henry*, 1255; *J. Hume*, 45; *J. Flavel*, iii. 239.

c Dr. Lyth.

"A beam of comfort, like the moon through clouds, gilds the black horror, and directs my way."—*Dryden.*

a "To sanctify God means here to cherish and evince a due sense of His character, as worthy of entire confidence, being able to defeat all the enemies of His people, and faithful to fulfil His promises of protection and deliverance."—*Henderson.*

dejected this morning?" "Because I have had a severe fall over that stumbling-block, my profligate son."[b]

16—18. (16) **bind**, *etc.*, words addressed by God to the Prophet. Comp. Da. xii. 4; Re. v. 1, 5, 9. It is here the indication that this particular message was complete: it also intimates that some time would elapse before the fulfilment. (17) **wait**, patiently God's time for fulfilment. **look for him**, *i.e.* watch for signs of His working and of His coming. (18) **children**, as Shear-jashub, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz. **signs and wonders**, testimonies and symbols. Wonder as set to attract attention; sign as set to teach the people God's message.[a] They were "personified prophecies."

Religious confidence.—

Not seldom, clad in radiant rest
Deceitfully goes forth the morn;
Not seldom, evening in the west
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove
To the confiding barque untrue;
And if she trust the stars above,
They can be treacherous too.

The umbrageous oak, in pomp outspread,
Full oft when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightning down upon the head
It promised to defend.

But Thou art true, incarnate Lord!
Who did vouchsafe for man to die;
Thy smile is sure, Thy plighted word
No change can falsify

I bent before Thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace with suppliant knee;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith, and hope, and ecstasy.[b]

19, 20. (19) **seek unto**, asking guidance from. **familiar spirits**, Le. xix. 31. **wizards**, Le. xix. 31. **peep**, or chirp. **mutter**, speak in a low, hollow manner, as if their voice came from the ground. **living .. dead**, an exclamation of surprise, and therefore abrupt and imperfect. "What madness to consult the dead in the interests of the living."[a] (20) **law**, *etc.*,[b] the will of God, as authoritatively revealed in His Word, and by His Prophets. **no light**, or no morning-dawn for them.

The duty of prayer (v. 19).—I. The proof that prayer is a duty. 1. From the relations in which we stand to God: 2. From the express commands of God; 3. From the practice of the saints in all ages; 4. From the example of Christ. II. The objections to the validity of this proof. 1. From the greatness of God; 2. From the knowledge of God; 3. From the goodness of God; 4. From the unchangeableness of God.[c]

The lost motion.—A motion was once made in the House of Commons for raising and embodying the militia, and, for the purpose of saving time, to exercise them on the Sabbath. When the resolution was about to pass, an old gentleman stood up, and said, "Mr. Speaker, I have one objection to make to this; I believe

[b] *Roberts.*

[a] Zec. iii. 8; 1 Co. iv. 9; He. x. 33.

[b] 16. *Dr. Wordsworth, Hals. Lec.* v. 17. *Dr. T. Owen*, xvii. 582; *Abp. Leighton*, iii. 444. v. 18. *R. Erskine*, i. 255.

The Spirit unites us to Christ, as blood does to Adam: the one is the source of natural, the other of spiritual life. We realise our oneness with Christ in the new nature, as we realise our oneness with Adam in the old.

If Christ invites all to come to Him, surely you ought to accept the invitation, unless He mentions you by name as not one of the number.

[b] *Wordsworth.*

[a] The absurdity of demonology is forcibly pointed out in this appeal. For the living shall one inquire of the dead?

[b] Ps xix. 7, 8, cxix. 129, 130; 2 Pe. i. 19—21.

[c] v. 20. *Dr. W. B. Collyer*, 702; *T. Gisborne*, 20; *H. Bosworth, Hals. Lec.* 79; *Bp. Shirley, Bamp. Lec.* 1.

[c] *G. Brooks.*

in an old book called the Bible." The members looked at one another, and the motion was dropped.

21, 22. (21) **through** it, the time of coming trouble. **hardly bestead**, or hardening himself. **hungry**, unsatisfied and craving. **look upward**, as speaking defiance against the God who will not let him have his own wilful way.[a] (22) **unto the earth**, or around them, and there they shall see nothing to give them hope. **driven to darkness**, or, "in thick darkness is he driven away, *i.e.* cast out of the land of Immanuel which he has despised and profaned."[b] "Driven onward, as by a sweeping storm."

Hunger an impulse to labour.—Hunger is one of the beneficent and terrible instincts. It is, indeed, the very fire of life, underlying all impulses to labour, and moving man to noble activities by its imperious demands. Look where we may, we see it as the motive power which sets the vast array of human machinery in action. It is hunger which brings these stalwart navvies together in orderly gangs to cut paths through mountains, to throw bridges across rivers, to intersect the land with the great iron-ways which bring city into daily communication with city. Hunger is the overseer of those men erecting palaces, prison-houses, barracks, and villas. Hunger sits at the loom, which, with stealthy power, is weaving the wondrous fabrics of cotton and silk. Hunger labours at the furnace and the plough, coercing the native indolence of man into strenuous and incessant activity. Let food be abundant and easy of access, and civilisation becomes impossible; for our higher efforts are dependent on our lower impulses in an indissoluble manner. Nothing but the necessities of food will force man to labour which he hates and will always avoid when possible. And although this seems obvious only when applied to the labouring classes, it is equally though less obviously true when applied to all other classes, for the money we all labour to gain is nothing but food, and the surplus of food, which will buy other men's labour. If in this sense hunger is seen to be a beneficent instinct, in another sense it is terrible; for when its progress is unchecked it becomes a devouring flame, destroying all that is noble in man, subjugating his humanity, and making the brute dominant in him, till finally life itself is extinguished. Beside the picture of the activities it inspires, we might also place a picture of the ferocities it evokes. Many an appalling story might be cited, from that of Ugolino in the famine-tower, to those of wretched shipwrecked men and women who have been impelled by the madness of starvation to murder their companions that they might feed upon their flesh.[c]

a "Detailed description of the despair wh. they shall fall into who seek necromancy instead of God." —*Fausset.*

b *Spk. Com.*

"The Prophet here describes in strong language the desperate condition of those who reject the Divine Word, and adhere to their own devices, or to the sinful inventions and practices of men." —*Henderson.*

Mi. iii. 6.

"Facts are to the mind the same thing as food to the body. On the due digestion of facts depends the strength and wisdom of the one, just as vigour and health depend on the other. The wisest in council, the ablest in debate, and the most agreeable companion in the commerce of human life, is that man who has assimilated to his understanding the greatest number of facts."—*Burke.*

c *Smiles.*

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1, 2. (1) **nevertheless**, *etc.*, better rend. "For darkness shall not (continually) be on it (*i.e.* the land) on which there is (now) distress."[a] **Zebulun**, *etc.*,[b] these districts had borne the brunt of the invasions from the north and east; so they were to be the first favoured with the new light. **way of the sea**, *i.e.* the tract about the Sea of Galilee. **of the nations**, or Gentiles,

a *Hengstenberg.*

"The change for the better, which was promised at the close of the 8th cha., is described in the 9th

as consisting in the rise of the Great Light upon the darkness,... the advent of a Divine successor to David, who should establish, restore, and enlarge his kingdom without any limitations."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Zebulun stretched across from the Mediterranean Sea at Mount Carmel to the Sea of Tiberias; Naphthali fr. the northern boundary of Zebulun, between that sea and Lebanon.

Mat. iv. 13, 15, 16.

vv. 1, 2. *W. Bridge*, v. 20.

vv. 1–7. *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kgs.* 249.

v. 2 *I. Newton*, iv. 91; *G. Carleton*, 126.

c Stems and Twigs.

d Dr. Kitto.

so called bec. the people were of a mixed race, and the land bordered on Gentile territories. The people of this district were greatly despised by the strict Jews. (2) great light, Is. lx. 1—3; Lu. i. 78, 79, ii. 32; Jno. i. 4, 5, 9. shadow of death, denoting the densest gloom, the most awful darkness. "The darkness of ignorance and the darkness of distress."

Night and morning (*v.* 2).—I. Our state by nature is set forth by the idea of night, which is a word that suggests—1. Sleep; 2. Peace; 3. Darkness; 4. Sin; 5. Helplessness. II. Christ's advent to the soul typified by the sunrise. 1. There was light: 2. Life; 3. Warmth; 4. Growth; 5. A sense of security and confidence. Apply:—(1) Has this great light risen on your soul? (2) Or is it still night?[c]

Jews and Tiberias.—A residence at Tiberias is highly valued by the Jews, because of the ancient renown of the place in connection with Jewish literature, and because they expect that the Messiah will make His appearance in the parts of Galilee bordering on the Lake of Tiberias—a remarkable fact when it is borne in mind that the true Messiah was rejected by them on this ground among others, that He did, as it seemed to them, come from this part of the land. It is understood that they found this expectation upon Isa. ix. 1, 2; not knowing—but may they soon know—that this very passage has found an application in the Gospel to the very neighbourhood in which they dwell: for Matthew, after reciting that Jesus left Nazareth and "came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim," adds, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up," Matt. iv. 12—16.[d]

3. not increased, better *to him* increased.[a] Whose joy thou hast increased. This verse is most naturally regarded as picturing the joy of the people in the dawning light of Messiah. joy in harvest,[b] the joy of realising at last what had been long waited for. divide the spoil, gaining thus unexpected or surprising possessions.

Earthly joy (*v.* 3).—Four kinds are noted in Scripture as most excellent and enjoyable. 1. Nuptial joy; 2. The joy of children; 3. The joy of conquest: 4. The joy of harvest.[c]

Joy in harvest.—"Kandan's wife has at length borne her husband a son, and all the relations are rejoicing together, like unto the joy of harvest." "Are you happy in your new situation?" "Yes; my *santosham*, my happiness, is greater than that of the time of harvest." "Listen to the birds, how merry they are; can they be taking in their harvest?"[d]

a There is a very slight difference between the Heb. words for 'not' and 'to him,' so that the one word may easily be mistaken for the other.

b Ps. iv. 7; Is. xxv. 9; comp. Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.

v. 3. *W. Jacobson*, 167.

c J. Flavel.

d Roberts.

4, 5. (4) broken, *etc.*, the yoke with wh. Israel was burdened. staff, or wooden part of the yoke that presses on the shoulder. rod, of his task-master. day of Midian, Ju. vii. 22.[a] The reference is appropriate bec. Gideon's victory took place in this very district of the country. (5) warrior, such as Gideon. noise, *etc.*, of the hand to hand conflict. burning, *etc.*, the idea is that "all warlike accoutrements shall be destroyed, as no longer required in the new era of peace."[b]

a Comp. Is. x. 26.

b Fausset. "For every boot of tramping warrior, and the garment rolled in blood, shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire."—*Kimchi.*

Freedom.—

Ye clouds! that far above me float and pause,
Whose pathless march no mortal may control!
Ye ocean waves! that whereso'er ye roll,
Yield homage only to eternal laws!
Ye woods! that listen to the night-birds' singing,
Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
Save when your own imperious branches swinging
Have made a solemn music of the wind!
Where, like a man beloved of God,
Through glooms which never woodman trod,
How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
My moonlight way o'er flowering weed I wound,
Inspired beyond the guess of folly,
By each rude shape and wild unconquering sound!
O ye loud waves! and O ye forests high!
And O ye clouds that far above me soar'd!
Thou rising sun! thou blue rejoicing sky!
Yea, everything that is and will be free!
Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
With what deep worship I have still adored
The spirit of divinest liberty![c]

6. for, intimates the ground on wh. such expectations rest. **unto us,** Israel and all mankind. **given,**[a] Jno. iii. 16. **government . . shoulder,** "the ensign of office used to be worn on the shoulder, in token of sustaining the government."[b] **Wonderful,** or wonder: miracle. **Counsellor,** or deviser of all wise counsel. **everlasting Father,** or Father of the future age. **Prince of Peace,**[c] reigning over a kingdom of established peace.

The incarnation of Christ (*v.* 6).—I. The event here celebrated may be interpreted historically. II. It may be interpreted experimentally. III. The glorious characters by which this gift is distinguished. 1. Its greatness; 2. Purpose; 3. Appropriateness; 4. Manner; 5. Obligations which it imposes. IV. Sentiments appropriate to the subject. 1. Personal interest; 2. Lively joy; 3. Boundless gratitude.— *Wonderful.*—I. The constitution of Christ's person. 1. He was the possessor of humanity; 2. A Divine person. II. The infinitude of Christ's love. Take as tests—1. The unworthiness of its objects; 2. The sacrifices of His love; 3. The preciousness of its bestowments. III. The glory of Christ's reign. He is the King—1. In every believer's soul; 2. To be King of this world; 3. To be King of the Church.

Names.—It is common in the East to describe any quality of a person by calling him the father of the quality. D'Herbelot, speaking of a very eminent physician, says, he did such admirable cures, that he was surnamed Aboul Berekiat, the father of benedictions. The original words of this title of Christ may be rendered, the father of that which is everlasting: Christ, therefore, as the Head and Introducer of an everlasting dispensation, never to give place to another, was very naturally, in the Eastern style, called the Father of eternity.[d] The phrase, "shall be called," refers not so much to the appellation by which the promised child should be known, as to the nature by which he should be distinguished. It is remarkable that the original word (*pela*), here rendered "wonderful," is elsewhere rendered "secret." Thus Judg. xiii. 17, 18, "And Manoah said unto the angel of the

"None can love freedom heartily but good men; the rest love not freedom, but license, wh. never hath more scope or more indulgence than under tyrants. Hence it is that tyrants are not oft offended by, nor stand much in doubt of, bad men, as being all naturally servile; but in whom virtue and true worth most is eminent, them they fear in earnest, as by right their masters; against them lies all their hatred and corruption."—*Milton.*

c *Coleridge.*

a Lu. ii. 10, 11.

b Comp. Is. xxii. 22; Re. iii. 7.

c "This hope of a Prince of Peace, who should quell the great enemy of man, was shadowed forth in mystical history by the priestly king of Salem; projected into prophecy under the title of 'Shiloh' (the tranquil one); realisedhumanly, in faint outlines, in the person of Solomon (Shelomoh, the peaceful one); then again limned by Solomon himself with greater richness of prophetic detail; and at last fully and clearly embodied in Isa.'s predictions concerning the righteous King and the 'Servant of the Lord,' by whom our peace would be worked out."—*Spk. Com. v.* 6. *Dr. R. Clerke,* 12; *Jer. Burroughs,* 68; *R. Alleine,* 183; *Dr. S. Clarke, v.* 21; **Z**

Adams, iii. 18; *T. Boston*, x. 178; *R. Venn*, 1; *E. Erskine*, ii. 5; *J. Benson*, ii. 478.

"His name ought to lie in secret behind every one of our thoughts, and speak to us from every object of nature: for us this bright majestic universe itself should be but as the shining jewel, on which His image, and only His, should stand engraved." —*Schiller.*

d Harmer.

e Bush.

a 2 Sa. vii. 11—16.

b "The two ideas of God's jealous partiality for His own people, and His jealous sensibility respecting His own honour, are promiscuously blended in the usage of the word, and are perhaps both included in the case before us. The expressions are derived from the dialect of human passion, but describe something absolutely right on God's part for the very reasons wh. demonstrate its absurdity and wickedness on man's." — *J. A. Alexander.*

c. 7. *J. Saurin*, ii. 81; *Dr. E. Payson*, iii. 62; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iii. 92; *Dr. J. Gill*, i. 87; *A. Fuller*, 613.

In the glass of Scripture we may catch many glimpses of the glory of Christ; the full vision will be when we

Lord, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass, we may do thee honour? And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret (*pela'*). Here the angel evidently appropriates one of the distinguishing titles of the promised Messiah, thus identifying his real character, and while ostensibly refusing to make known his name, does, in fact, impart one of the most significant and sublime of all his designations.[c] These names applied to Christ have been read as meaning, "He who counsels wonderful things," or a "wonder of a counsellor." In reality the names are distinct. Just as the angel who appeared to Manoah, when asked his name, replied that it was incomprehensible by man, and he was indeed the word of the Lord,—so here, in reference to the same Divine Person, it is indicated that His nature was not fully conceivable by man. "Not only is this or that wonderful in Him, but He Himself is throughout a wonder. Then, again, by the spirit of counsel He possesses, He is always able to give counsel to His people. Whatever good thing in the way of counsel or advice others may give flows from Him through some intermediate channel."

7. **no end**, no limit. It should go on increasing until it embraced the whole earth. **throne of David**. Messiah's kingdom is regarded as the spiritual fulfilment of the promise made to David.[a] **order it**, by giving it a firm and stable constitution. **justice**, better, *righteousness*. **zeal**, or jealousy,[b] anxiety to prove the Divine faithfulness by the complete fulfilment of the Divine promises.

Prophetic titles given to the Messiah.—In the Talmud the idea first appears that Hezekiah was the son in whose birth the Prophet saw the advent of an era of glory for the Jewish people; but the reason of this application of the text, so unlike the manner in which generally the Jewish traditions are so true to the national conviction, that the Prophets in all similar passages spoke of the Messiah, is to us confirmatory rather than the contrary of the belief that our Lord is the object of Isaiah's words. For their difficulty lay in the phrase, "The mighty God." They had hardened themselves into the settled belief that the Messiah was to be a national hero, their Cyrus and Alexander, who should command their armies, win for them battles, found for them an empire, and establish their supremacy over the hated heathen; he was to be a man whose sons should reign in his stead: and therefore the title "The mighty God" contradicted their expectations, and in enmity to the Christian interpretation they sought for some other person to whom they might apply the words. It is evident, therefore, that the translation whereby modern commentators make this title signify nothing, had not suggested itself to them; for these tell us that, according to the idiom of the Hebrew language, the words may mean only "a god-like hero," whereas the Jews themselves translated it "a strong God," and were not aware in their expositions of the possibility of rendering it in any other way. To the Christian this phrase is the strongest proof that the Prophet was speaking of Christ; for in Him only has God become incarnate in the flesh: and as he reads the titles whereby the dignity of the Child is shadowed forth, he thinks with reverence upon the mystery of the Godhead united with the manhood, whereby Jesus of Nazareth was able

to be the Prince of Peace, the Reconciler of lost man unto a just though merciful God.[c] We see here the universal extent of the Redeemer's kingdom; and, in this respect, how much does it differ from all the kingdoms of the earth! A universal empire, in the hands of a mortal, is a huge unwieldy thing; a heap of confusion; a burden to mankind; and it has always rushed headlong from its glory, and fallen to pieces by its own weight. But Jesus is equal to the immense province of an empire strictly universal; His hand is able to hold the reins; and it is the blessing of our world to be under His administration. He will turn what appear to us scenes of confusion into perfect order, and convince all worlds that He has not taken one wrong step in the whole plan of His infinite government.[d]—*The zeal of the Lord.*—The word "zeal" (or jealousy, as it might be rendered) in the Hebrew is literally "glowing fire," from a root meaning deep red. Zeal is, indeed, one of the most fruitful of Old Testament ideas in relation to the reconciliation of man to God. It is two-sided. The fire of love has for its obverse the fire of wrath. For jealousy contends for the object of its love against everything that touches either the object or the love itself. That God should leave His nation in the hands of such kings as Ahaz, and apparently yield it up to the imperial forces of this present world, would be irreconcilable with this love if it continued long. But this love ultimately consumes all that is adverse, and gives His people the true King, in whom what was foreshadowed in David and Solomon reached its highest fulfilment.[e]

8—10. (8) **hath lighted**, better, *shall fall*, with crushing force. Jacob and Israel are here identical, indicating the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. (9) **know**, or feel by personal suffering. **stoutness of heart**, shown in resistance of the Divine messages. (10) **build . . stones**, full of self-confidence, they felt perfectly able to repair any seeming disasters that might come on them.[a] **sycamores**, a "light wood, unfit for massive buildings."

Building materials.—The houses of the lower orders in Egypt are in like manner constructed of unburnt bricks, or square pieces of clay, baked in the sun, and only one story high; but those of the higher classes, of stone, are generally two, and sometimes three stories high. These facts are at once a short and lively comment on the words of the Prophet: "All the people shall know, even Ephraim, and the inhabitants of Samaria, that say, in the pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars." Bricks dried in the sun, are poor materials for building, compared with hewn stone, which, in Egypt, is almost equal to marble, and forms a strong contrast between the splendid palace and mud-walled cabin. And if, as is probable, the houses of the higher orders in Israel were built with the same species of costly and beautiful stone, the contrast stated by the Prophet places the vaunting of his wealthier countrymen in a very strong light. The boastful extravagance of that people is still further displayed by the next figure: "The sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars;" the forests of sycamore, the wood of which we have been accustomed to employ in building, are cut down by the enemy, but instead of them we will import cedars, of whose fragrant and beautiful wood we will construct and adorn our habitations. The are within the veil, and behold the Lord in the plenitude of His glory.

c Dr. R. P. Smith.

d Dr. Davies.

Christ is the Pearl of great price. Pearls are not like pebbles, which are found on the sea-shore; they lie in the depths of the ocean, and require much labour to secure them.

"Uttered out of time, or concealed in its season, good savoureth of evil."—*Tupper.*

e Delitzsch.

a "The impenitent Ephraimites treat with contempt the results of Tiglath-Pileser's invasion, and boast that they will speedily place their affairs in a far more prosperous condition than before."—*Henderson.*

Pr. xvi. 18, 1 Pe. v. 5.

"Great gifts are beautiful as Rachel: but pride makes them also barren like her. Either we must lay self aside, or God will lay us aside."—*Garnall.* "God crowns with mercy; but a swollen head is not fit to have that crown put upon it."—*Jenkyn.* "Satan is subtle: he will make a man proud that he is not proud."—*Brooks.*

"Mine be the heart that can itself defend."—*Shakespeare.*

b Paxton.

a 2 Chr. xxviii. 18, 22, 23.

v. 12. *W. Cradock, Divine Drops,* 1; *Abp. Tillotson,* i. 219.

"A rich South American farmer called the attention of a guest to his vast droves of horses, saying, 'Think you, general, that I shall ever be in want of horses?—not even if God Almighty wished it.' Soon after, an epidemic swept off every horse the blasphemer had."—*Paez.*

sycamore grew in abundance in the low country of Judæa, and was not much esteemed: but the cedar was highly valued: it was brought at a great expense, and with much labour, from the distant and rugged summits of Lebanon, to beautify the dwellings of the great, the palaces of kings, and the temple of Jehovah. It was therefore an extravagant boast, which betrayed the pride and vanity of their depraved hearts, that all the warnings, threatenings, and judgments of the living God were insufficient to subdue or restrain.[b]

11, 12. (11) adversaries, *etc.*, with special reference to the Assyrians. against him, *i.e.* Israel. Assyria would first conquer Syria, and then attack Israel. (12) Philistines, who were ready to seize every opportunity for making inroads.[a] open mouth, as a wild beast. for . . still, *see* ch. v. 25.

One sin the soul's ruin.—While I was walking in the garden one bright morning, a breeze came through and set all the flowers and leaves a fluttering. Now that is the way flowers talk, so I pricked up my ears and listened. Presently, an old elder tree said, "Flowers, shake off your caterpillars!" "Why?" said a dozen altogether—for they were like some children, who always say "Why?" when they are told to do anything—bad children those! The elder said, "If you don't they'll eat you up alive." So the flowers set themselves a-shaking till the caterpillars were shaken off. In one of the middle beds there was a beautiful rose, who shook off all but one, and she said to herself, "Oh, that's a beauty! I'll keep that one." The elder overheard her, and called out, "One caterpillar is enough to spoil you." "But," said the rose, "look at his brown and crimson fur, and his beautiful black eyes, and scores of little feet; I want to keep him: surely one won't hurt me." A few mornings after, I passed the rose again; there was not a whole leaf on her; her beauty was gone; she was all but killed, and had only life enough to weep over her folly, while the tears stood like dewdrops on her tattered leaves. "Alas! I didn't think one caterpillar would ruin me."

13—15. (13) turneth not, in penitence and prayer. smiteth, or chastiseth in order to humble. seek, the forgiveness of.[a] (14) head and tail, the high and the low, all ranks. branch, palm branch, growing right at the top of the tree. rush, sedge in the marshy ground; a type of the poor. (15) ancient, ch. iii. 2, 3. prophet . . lies, "he is lowest of all: more degraded than any whom he cajoles."[b] Morally the basest of the people.

Calls to repentance.—Wherever we may be, there are voices which call us to repentance. Nature, as well as our whole life, is full of them, only our ears are heavy and will not hear. There is an awakening call in the rolling thunder, which is a herald of infinite majesty—in the lightning, which darts down before thee, carrying with it destruction—in the stars, which look down upon thee from such remote regions, as if they would say, "How far, O man! art thou cast out from thy home!"—in the flower of the field, which, in its transient blooming and fading, depicts thy own brief existence upon earth—in the midnight hour, when the church-bell strikes upon thy ear, like the pulse of time, which rapidly hastens away, and calls out to thee to hasten to save thy soul. Nay, where are we not surrounded by awakening voices of

a "To seek God in the idiom of Scrip. is to pray to Him (Is. lv. 6), to consult Him (Is. viii. 19), to resort to Him for help (Is. xxxi. 1), to hold communion with Him (Am. v. 4. 5)."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Spk. Com.

v. 13. *T. Scott,* v. 411.

v. 14. *T. Horton,* 267.

"In vain is that washing where the next sin defileth: he hath ill-repented whose sins are repeated:

this nature? They sit upon the tombstones of our churchyards, and their language is, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment." Their warning voice resounds from every funeral-car that rolls past thee. It may be heard on every birthday which thou celebratest; in every fit of illness by which thou art attacked; in every danger that threatens thy life; as well as in that secret uneasiness which incessantly steals through thy soul.[c]

16—19. (16) **leaders**, ch. iii. 12. **destroyed**, *Heb.* swallowed up. (17) **no joy**, no such interest and pleasure in them as would lead Him to save them from the devouring sword. **fatherless**, *etc.*, usually such objects of tenderest Divine compassion. **hypocrite**, better, *libertine*, or impious, profane. "An atrocious, unprincipled character." (18) **wickedness**, *i.e.* the consequences of wickedness, wh. are the Divine judgments upon it. **burneth**, blazes forth.[a] **thickets**, fig. from the terrible burning of great forests, to indicate that the higher classes shall suffer as well as the poorer in the day of judgment. **smoke**, miserable ending of their wealth and pride. They roll upwards as a volume of smoke. (19) **darkened**, or set on fire. The Prophet sees the black cloud of smoke darkening the sky. **spare**, in the general woe none shall care for the other.

Man's readiness to invent excuse for sin.—A traveller in Venezuela illustrates the readiness of men to lay their faults on the locality, or on anything rather than themselves, by the story of a hard drinker who came home one night in such a condition that he could not for some time find his hammock. When this feat was accomplished, he tried in vain to get off his big riding-boots. After many fruitless efforts he lay down in his hammock, and soliloquised aloud, "Well, I have travelled all the world over; I lived five years in Cuba, four in Jamaica, five in Brazil, I have travelled through Spain and Portugal, and been in Africa, but I never yet was in such an abominable country as this, where a man is obliged to go to bed with his boots on." Commonly enough are we told by evildoers in excuse for their sins that no man could do otherwise were he in their position, that there is no living at their trade honestly, that in such a street shops must be open on a Sunday, that their health required an excursion to Brighton on the Sabbath because their labours were so severe, that nobody could be religious in the house in which they were engaged, and so on, all to the same effect, and about as truthful as the soliloquy of the drunkard of Venezuela.[b]

20, 21. (20) **snatch**, a vivid picture of the general distress: each gets food how he can, and thus cannot satisfy himself.[a] **eat . . arm**, fig. for plucking away and eating the food of his nearest and dearest relatives. Fighting with those who are dear to him as his own arm. (21) **Manasseh, Ephraim**, the two leading tribes of the ten making up the northern kingdom. The point of the reference lies in these tribes being *brethren*.[b]

Prevention of famine.—A person who passes from the trading towns and cultured fields of England, to the Hebridean Isles, or remote parts of Ireland, is astonished at the comparative wretchedness of their destitute inhabitants; but few consider that these scenes of misery only exhibit a view of what Europe was, ere the

that stomach is the worse for vomiting that licketh up his vomit."—*Quarles.*

c Krummacher.

a "God having withdrawn His Providential restraints, the pent-up passions of men have broken out like flames."—*Spk. Com.*

Diogenes, being at Olympia, saw at that celebrated festival some young men of Rhodes arrayed most magnificently. He exclaimed, "This is pride!" Afterwards, meeting with some Lacedemonians in a mean and sordid dress, he said, "And this is also pride."

"Nor all that heralds rake from coffin'd clay, nor florid prose, nor honeyed lies of rhyme, can blazon evil deeds, or consecrated crime."—*Lord Byron.*

b C. H. Spurgeon.

a "In times of anarchy, cruelty and self-will appear to grow more inordinate by being indulged."—*Spk. Com.*

b "These prophecies of intestine and internecine bloodshed in Palestine were fulfilled in such struggles of Is-

rael and Judah as are recorded in 2 Chr. xxviii. 69." —*Wordsworth.*

"Misery is caused for the most part not by a heavy crush of disaster, but by the corrosion of less visible evils, which canker enjoyment, and undermine security. The visit of an invader is necessarily rare, but domestic animosities allow no cessation."—*Johnson.*

c Percy Anec.

spirit of commerce diffused the blessings which naturally flow from her improvements. In the Hebrides, the failure of harvest almost depopulates an island. Having little or no traffic to purchase grain, numbers of the young people betake themselves to the Continent in quest of employment and food, leaving a few less adventurous behind to beget a new race, the heirs of the same misfortunes. From the same cause, from the want of traffic, the kingdom of England has often felt more dreadful effects than these. Even in the days when her Henries and Edwards plumed themselves with the trophies of France, how often has famine spread all her horrors over city and village! Our modern histories neglect this characteristical feature of ancient days, but the rude chronicles of those ages inform us that three or four times in almost every reign of long continuance was England thus visited. The failure of one crop was then severely felt, and two bad harvests together were almost insupportable. But commerce has now opened another scene; it has armed Government with the happiest power that can be exerted by the rulers of a nation—the power to prevent every extremity which may possibly arise from a deficiency of native produce to supply the wants of the people.[c]

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1, 2. (1) decree, in the courts of justice. write, referring to the professional interpreters of the law.[a] grievousness, or injustice. (2) turn aside, *etc.*, or exclude, prevent from gaining their right. take . . people, by fraud and violence.[b] widows, whose natural defenders are dead.

Decrees.—The manner of making Eastern decrees differs from ours: they are first written, and then the magistrate authenticates them, or annuls them. This, I remember, is the Arab manner, according to D'Arvieux. When an Arab wanted a favour of the emir, the way was to apply to the secretary, who drew up a decree according to the request of the party; if the emir granted the favour, he printed his seal upon it; if not, he returned it torn to the petitioner. Sir J. Chardin confirms this account, and applies it, with great propriety, to the illustration of a passage which I never thought of when I read over D'Arvieux. After citing Is. x. 1, "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and to the writers that write grievousness," for so our translators have rendered the latter part of the verse in the margin, much more agreeably than in the body of the version, Sir John goes on, "The manner of making the royal acts and ordinances hath a relation to this: they are always drawn up according to the request; the first minister, or he whose office it is, writes on the side of it, 'according to the king's will,' and from thence it is sent to the secretary of state, who draws up the order in form." They that consult Vitringa upon the passage, will find that commentators have been perplexed about the latter part of this woe: every one sees the propriety of denouncing evil on those that decree unrighteous judgments; but it is not very clear why they are threatened that write them: it certainly would be wrong to punish the clerks of our courts, that have no other concern in unjust decrees, than barely writing them down, according to the

a "Or magistrates who caused unjust decisions to be recorded."—*Fiausset.*

"Execute written documents which exact what is unjust."—*Wordsworth.*

b There is no surer sign of the misery of a people than is found in the corrupt administration of justice.

Is. xxix. 21; Am. v. 12; Pr. xviii. 5.

"How many sentences have I seen more criminal than the crimes themselves! all which makes me remember the ancient opinions, 'that there is a necessity a man must do wrong by retail, who will do right in gross; and injustice in little things, that will

duty of their place, as mere amanuenses. But according to the Eastern mode, we find he that writes or draws up the order at first, is deeply concerned in the injustice, since he expresses matters as he pleases, and is the source of the mischief; the superior only passes or rejects it. He indeed is guilty if he passes an unjust order, because he ought to have rejected it: but a great deal of the guilt unquestionably comes upon him who first draws the order, and who makes it more or less oppressive to others, just as he pleases, or rather, according to the present that is made him by the party that solicits the order. For it appears from D'Arvieux, that the secretary of the emir drew up no order without a present, which was wont to be proportionate to the favour asked; and that he was very oppressive in his demands. In this view of things the words of the Prophet are very clear, and easy to be understood; and Sir John Chardin, by his acquaintance with the East, proves a much better interpreter than the most learned Western commentators, even celebrated rabbis themselves: for according to Vitringa, Rabbi David Kimchi supposes the judges themselves were the writers the Prophet meant, and so called, because they caused others to write unjust determinations: though Vitringa admits that such an interpretation does not well agree with the conjugation of the Hebrew word.[c]

3, 4. (3) **day of visitation,** when God takes judgment on such iniquities. **desolation,** or storm. **from far,** *i.e.* distant Assyria. **leave . . glory,** *i.e.* your wealth and treasures. How will you secure them in the evil day? (4) **bow . . prisoners,** *i.e.* "whether in prison or in the train of those led away, the other captives will tread them under foot."[a]

The uses of affliction.—There is a little plant, small and stunted, growing under the shade of a broad spreading oak, and this little plant values the shade which covers it, and greatly does it esteem the quiet rest which its noble friend affords. Once upon a time there comes along the woodman, and with his sharp axe he fells the oak. The plant weeps and cries: "My shelter is gone, every rough wind will blow upon me!" "No," says the angel of the flower; "now will the sun get at thee, now will the shower fall on thee in more copious abundance than before; now thy stunted form shall spring up into loveliness, and thy flower, which could never have expanded itself to perfection, shall now laugh in the sunshine, and men shall say, How greatly hath this plant increased, how glorious hath become its beauty through the removal of that which was its shade and delight.[b]

5, 6. (5) **O Assyrian,** better, "Woe to thee also, O Assyrian." **the rod,** or agent used for the punishment of My people. A great empire, but only a rod in God's hand. **staff,** or sceptre. **indignation,** *i.e.* the instrument for expressing My indignation. (6) **hypocritical,** *see* ch. ix. 17. Reference here is to Judah, not Ephraim. **people . . wrath,** who, by their continued transgressions, have become the objects of Divine wrath.[a]

The Assyrian (*vv.* 5—19).—I. His commission—subordinate, a mere rod in God's hand—defined. II. His pride: he boasts of his schemes, his achievements, his strength and wisdom, of what he will do against God. III. His rebuke: just, keen, humiliating. IV. His punishment: irresistible, sudden, signal, effected by Divine power.[b]

come to do justice in great; that human justice is formed after the model of physic,' according to which, all that is utile is also just and honest; 'that nature of herself proceeds contrary to justice in most of her works;' and of what is received by the Cyrenaicks, 'that there is nothing just of itself, but that customs and laws make justice.'"—*Montaigne.*

c Harmer.

a Nägelsbach.
"Or, 'if they do not bow down under the captives, they shall fall under the slain.'"—*J. A. Alexander.*
"Or, sinking, for very shame and self-reproach, lower than the captives."—*Spk. Com.*
"Bow down, as in the stocks, in which the head, feet, and hands were cramped together."—*Wordsworth.*
v. 3. *J. Grose,* v. 109; *B. Beddome,* vii. 156; *J. Foster,* ii. 40.
b C. H. Spurgeon.

a Comp. Ezek. xxix. 19, 20.

vv. 5–7. *Bp. Gleig,* 135; *Bp. L. Bagot, Warb. Lec.* 1.

b Dr. Lyth.

"Justice is as strictly due between neighbour nations, as between neighbour citizens. A highwayman is as much a robber

when he plunders in a gang, as when single; and a nation that makes an unjust war is only a great gang of robbers."—*Franklin.*

"Justice is the idea of God, the ideal of man, the rule of conduct writ in the nature of mankind."—*Theodore Parker.*

"Where evil may be done, 'tis right to ponder; where only suffer'd, know, the shortest pause is much too long."—*Hannah More.*

c C. H. Spurgeon.

Wrath subdued.—The wrath of man shall praise God. I believe the last song of the redeemed, when they shall ultimately triumph, will celebrate in heavenly stanzas the wrath of man overcome by God. Sometimes, after great battles, monuments are raised to the memory of the fight; and of what are they composed? They are composed of weapons of death and of instruments of war which have been taken from the enemy. Now, to use that illustration, as I think it may be properly used, the day is coming when fury and wrath and hatred and strife shall all be woven into a song; and the weapons of our enemies, when taken from them, shall serve to make monuments to the praise of God. Rail on, rail on, blasphemer! Smite on, smite on, tyrant! Lift thy heavy hand, O despot! Crush the truth, which thou canst not crush; knock from His head the crown.—the crown that is far above thy reach, poor, puny, impotent mortal as thou art! Go on, go on! But all thou doest shall but increase His glories. For aught we care, we bid you still proceed with all your wrath and malice. Though it shall be worse for you, it shall be more glorious for our Master: the greater your preparations for war, the more splendid shall be His triumphal chariot when He shall ride through the streets of heaven in pompous array. The more mighty your preparations for battle, the more rich the spoil which He shall divide with the strong. O Christian, fear not the foe! Remember, the harder his blows, the sweeter thy song; the greater his wrath, the more splendid thy triumph; the more he rages, the more shall Christ be honoured in the day of His appearing.[c]

7—9. (7) **meaneth not so,** his intention is simply world-conquest, self-aggrandisement. So, though he is used by God, he will also in due time be judged by God.[a] **princes . . kings,** *i.e.* as great and powerful as kings. Assyria bowed many kings to become subject princes. (9) **is not,** *etc.*, *i.e.* was any one of these cities able to withstand me? Did I not serve them all alike?[b] **Calno,** or Kalneh, Ge. x. 10: on E. bank of Tigris. **Carchemish,** 2 Chr. xxxv. 20. **Hamath,** Ge. x. 12. On the banks of the Orontes. **Arpad,** always connected with Hamath.

Atrocity of hypocrisy.—

Why, I can smile, and murder while I smile;
And cry content, to that which grieves my heart
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy:
I can add colours to the chameleon;
Change shapes, with Proteus, for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it further off, I'll pluck it down.[c]

Iscariotism.—A single and apt expression for an important combination of ideas has great convenience and efficacy. It prevents confusion, and tends to establish truth and right. It furnishes a distinctive mark for what is good or bad, for what is

[a] "This uprooting of conquered nations was a new thing in the world; devised by Syria as a means of carrying out that imperial policy wh. originated with it; as if it were bent on realising the dream of the old Babel builders."—*Spk. Com.*
[b] Is. xxxvi. 19, 20, xxxvii. 12, 13.
[c] *Shakespeare.*
"Hypocrites do not walk with God, but halt with Him; they follow Him as a dog doth his master, till he comes by a carrion. They will launch no further out into the main than they may be sure to return at pleasure safe to the shore."—*J. Trapp.*
"Hypocrisy cannot so properly be said to be one

worthy of honour or dishonour. A pretended zeal for the welfare of others, for the purpose of basely promoting one's own, I term Iscariotism. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. Then saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor: but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." It was Iscariotism that Dr. Johnson meant, when he said, in allusion, I believe, to Wilkes, that patriotism was the last resource of a scoundrel. Patriotism is pure gold; Iscariotism is base counterfeit. The prevalence of Iscariotism is a reflection upon the constitution or administration of any government, because it cannot exist but where there is weakness or corruption. Vigour and purity are quite fatal to it. It thrives under the oligarchic and ochlocratic principles, but withers to nothing under the democratic. . . . . It lives by being paid by the many, or bought by the few, and its course is determined by the highest bidding. Its real character is gross selfishness; its assumed, disinterested zeal; its means of succeeding, falsehood and impudence. Besides political, there are charitable Iscariots, who serve their own ends by a busy interference in public institutions. Their real character is selfishness also; their assumed, extraordinary philanthropy and liberality; their means of success, plausibility and cunning. Besides selfishness, Iscariots, political and charitable, have this in common, that they aim to keep those they affect to befriend in a constant state of dependence.[d]

10, 11. (10) **idols**, idol-gods, with which the king of Assyria is represented as boastfully comparing Jehovah.[a] **excel**, in number, and artistic qualities. (11) **her idols**, lit. *grievous things*. So he blasphemously spoke of Jehovah and His worship.

An Indian youth.—A native gentleman of India, in relating his history to one of the missionaries, said:—My father was an officiating priest of a heathen temple, and was considered in those days a superior English scholar; and, by teaching the English language to wealthy natives, realised a very large fortune. At a very early period, when a mere boy, I was employed by my father to light the lamps in the pagoda, and attend to the various things connected with the idols. I hardly remember the time when my mind was not exercised on the folly of idolatry. These things, I thought, were made by the hand of man, can move only by man, and, whether treated well or ill, are unconscious of either. Why all this cleaning, anointing, illuminating, etc.? One evening, these considerations so powerfully wrought on my youthful mind, that instead of placing the idols according to custom, I threw them from their pedestals, and left them with their faces in the dust. My father, on witnessing what I had done, chastised me so severely, as to leave me almost dead. I reasoned with him, that if they could not get up out of the dust, they were not able to do what I could; and that instead of being worshipped as gods, they deserved to lie in the dust, where I had thrown them. He was implacable, and vowed to disinherit me, and, as the first step to it, sent me away from his house. He relented on his death-bed, and left me all his wealth. While this anecdote shows us the folly of idolatry, and the determined oppo-

single sin, as the sinfulness of other sins; it is among sins, as sincerity among graces; now that is not one grace, but an ornament that beautifies and graces all other graces. The preciousness of faith is, that it is unfeigned; and of love, to be without dissimulation."—*A Divine of the 17th Century.*

"Lapidaries tell us of the Chelydonian stone, that it will retain its virtue and lustre no longer than it is enclosed in gold. A fit emblem of the hypocrite, who is only good while he is enclosed in golden prosperity, safety, and felicity."—*T. Brooks.*

d Moir.

a "He regarded foreign gods as impotent and worthless, esp. after having, with so much ease, conquered the cities and countries of wh. they were the supposed protectors."—*Henderson.*

A mother was describing to her little son the idols which heathen nations worship as gods. "I suppose, mamma," said the boy, "that these heathens do not look up to the same sun, and moon, and stars which we do." "Yes, my dear, they do." "Why, then, I wonder that they do not think there must be a better God than these idols."

b R. T. S.

sition of this youth to what was foolish and wicked, it proves also that when we do that which is right in the sight of God. He will take care that our fellow-creatures shall not seriously injure us.[b]

12—14. (12) **performed,** that purpose for wh. Assyria was to be used as the agent and instrument. **punish . . heart,** the same pride and hardness of heart would bring Assyria into Jehovah's judgment. "The *fruit* of his stoutness of heart was cruelty, unrestrained lust of empire, and blasphemy." **glory,** or vaunting, *v.* 15. **high looks,** ch. ii. 11. (13) **strength . . hand,** taking all the glory to himself.[a] **valiant man,** or bull, wh. was the symbol of the Assyrian power. (14) **moved . . wing,** *etc.*, to make even a show of opposition.[b]

Note on vv. 13, 14.—These are the sentiments and boastings of Sennacherib, a proud Assyrian monarch, who viewed and treated cities just as we in Africa viewed and treated ostrich nests, when they fell in our way; we seized the eggs as if they had been our own, because we had found them, and because there was no power that could prevent us. So did Sennacherib seize and plunder cities with as little compunction as we seized the eggs of the absent ostrich; never thinking of the misery for life which he thereby brought on many peaceable families, who had done nothing to injure or offend him.[c]

a Comp. Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.

b "The Assyrian compares his conquests not to the easy work of *reaping* nests, but the much easier one of gathering eggs fr. *forsaken* nests. The people fled before him, leaving their treasures in his hands."—*Nägelsbuch.* Ha. i. 11—15; 2 Ki. xix. 20—24. *v.* 13. *Dr. R. Gordon,* 23.

c Campbell.

a J. A. Alexander.

"The absurdity of Assyria's vaunting is forcibly depicted by supposing the case of an inanimate tool disengaging itself from the power of the intelligent agent by whom it is used, and treating him as if they had exchanged places with each other." —*Henderson.*

15, 16. (15) **boast,** or vaunt. "The idea is not merely that of boastful opposition, but of preposterous inversion of the true relation bet. agent and instrument, bet. mind and matter."[a] **shaketh it,** maketh it move to and fro. **staff . . wood,** better, that wh. is *not wood, i.e.* the man who uses it; but with further reference to man, the instrument, presuming to control God the agent. (16) **Lord of hosts,** an unusual combination of Divine names.[b] **fat ones,** choice soldiers. **leanness,** prob. some withering disease.[c] Specific diseases always attend on armies. **a burning,** with poss. reference to destruction of Sennac.'s host by the hot sirocco blast.[d]

The worker and his tools (*v.* 15).—These words point to one of the common temptations of strong men in every sphere of action to rely on their own skill and power. Consider—I. The real connection of human industry with God—useful and fine arts belong to the original idea of man as a working being; note the kind of world which God has made our present home, also the mode in which the Scriptures speak of the arts; learn to separate human handiwork from human sin. II. The disconnection of industrial pursuits from God in the minds of men generally: this evil may exist either in a positive or in a negative sense; the sources of it are religious ignorance and alienation from God, the forms in which it is developed are various; the duties especially incumbent upon the Christians of this land in connection with their daily labour are the unfailing recognition of the Divine Providence,—humility, justice, and kindness.[e]

Utility of labour.—

Nature lives by labour;
Beast, bird, air, fire, the heavens and rolling world,
All live by action: nothing lives at rest
But death and ruin. Man is born to care;

b "Ha-Adon, the Supreme Judge, who is also Sovereign Ruler, *Adonai-Sebaoth,* Lord of Hosts."—*Spk. Com.*

c Ps. cvi. 15; Isa. xvii 4.

d 2 Chr. xxxii. 21; Isa. xxxvii. 36

e S. Martin.

"Then work while the day lasts, and ere the night shadow shall gather its gloom, and ye

Fa-hion'd, improved by labour; this of old
Wise states observing, gave that happy law,
Which doom'd the rich and needy, ev'ry rank,
To manual occupation, and oft call'd
Their chieftains from the spade, or furrowing plough,
Or bleating sheepfold. Hence utility
Through all conditions; hence the joys of health;
Hence strength of arm, and clear, judicious thought;
Hence corn, and wine, and oil, all in life
Delectable. What simple nature yields
(And nature does her part) are only rude
Materials, cumbers on the thorny ground:
'Tis toil that makes them wealth.[f]

labour no more."—*Emily J. Bugbee.*

"Do what thou dost as if the earth were heaven, and that thy last day were the judgment day; when all's done, nothing's done."—*Kingsley.*

[f] *Dyer.*

17—19. (17) **light of Israel**, a fig. recalling the guiding pillar of cloud and fire. **for a fire**, kindling Assyria as if it were mere stubble.[a] **thorns and briers**, officers and soldiers.[b] **one day**, as see 2 Ki. xix. 25. (18) **forest**, the wilder districts. **fruitful field**, the cultivated districts; intimating the desolation of the whole country. **soul and body**, a proverbial expression meaning *utterly*. It denotes the entire person. **standard-bearer**, when the standard thus falls, a panic seizes the whole host.[c] (19) **rest**, *i.e.* those surviving the destruction. **child**, who cannot count up to high numbers.

Pride and downfall of the Assyrian monarch (*vv.* 12—17).—The doctrine of an all-disposing Providence is most consolatory to the mind of man. See it—I. Fulfilled in Sennacherib; he was a proud and haughty monarch, God brought him down in a most awful manner. II. As illustrated at this time (Jan. 13, 1814), point out the resemblance between Napoleon and Sennacherib. 1. His unconscious agency; 2. His great success; 3. His atheistic pride; 4. His sudden fall. III. As speaking to men of all ages. We should—1. Receive afflictions as from the hand of God; 2. Acknowledge God in our successes; 3. Look to the final issue of everything.[d]

Note on v. 19.—Volney remarks, in a note, that there are but four or five of those trees which deserve any notice; and in a note, it may be added, from the words of Isaiah, "The rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them," ch. x. 19. Could not the infidel write a brief note, or state a minute fact, without illustrating a prophecy? Maundrell, who visited Lebanon in the end of the seventeenth century, and to whose accuracy in other matters all subsequent travellers who refer to him bear witness, describes some of the cedars near the top of the mountain as "very old, and of a prodigious bulk, and others younger, of a smaller size." Of the former he could reckon up only sixteen. He measured the largest, and found it above twelve yards in girth. Such trees, however few in number, show that the cedars of Lebanon had once been no vain boast. But after the lapse of more than a century, not a single tree of such dimensions is now to be seen. Of those which now remain, as visited by Captains Irby and Mangles, there are about fifty in the whole, on a single small eminence, from which spot the cedars are the only trees to be seen in Lebanon.[e]

[a] The same cloud that was light to Israel was darkness to Egypt.

[b] "The fig. poss. alludes to their lances and other pointed weapons."—*Gesenius.*

[c] "Some think the ref. may be to the Assyrian king, and propose to read, 'He shall be utterly dispirited, and like the fainting away of a sick man;' *i.e.*, he shall resemble a wretched invalid, sinking through weakness and want of sustenance." — *Henderson.*

"From his exhaustless store the Prophet produces another figure, and calls Assyria a weakling, who pining dies away." — *Nägelsbach.*

[d] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"He that labours is tempted by one devil; he that is idle, by a thousand."—*Italian Proverb.*

[e] *Keith.*

20, 21. (20) **remnant**, *comp.* 2 Chro. xxviii. 5, xxx. 6. **again stay**, or continue to stay, *i.e.* lean for support on

[a] "It is evident that this passage was composed

when the Assyrian alliance was already an historical fact." —*Nägelsbach.*

2 Ki. xvi. 7.

b J. A. Alexander.

c Comp. the name *Shear-Jashub*, Isa. vii. 3.

d W. Jay.

Every hour life's sands are sliding from beneath incautious feet, and with sin's fatal flower in the incautious hand the trifler goes to his doom. The requiem of each departure is an echo of the Saviour's question, What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Live as in God's sight, mindful of thy position as a child of God, and as a servant of Jesus. Meditate on His Word; pray always. Then you will know when to close and when to open the lips; when to listen; and how to behave, if wrongfully accused.

e R. T. S.

Assyria.[a] **in truth**, *i.e.* sincerely. Jer. iv. 1—4. "They would trust God in *sincerity*, as opposed to a mere hypocritical profession, and with *constancy*, as opposed to capricious vacillation."[b] (21) **mighty God**, who alone can defend; whose might will have been proved in the destruction of the Assy. hosts.[c]

A happy conversion (v. 20).—Refer to history of the Jews, their sins, and punishment. I. Consider what is said of their former error. 1. They had exercised an improper dependence; 2. Their dependence had been disappointed; 3. Their folly was to be corrected by their sovereign. II. What is said of their renewed experience. 1. It is enlightened; 2. Extensive; 3. Blessed. III. The reality of their change. 1. They shall stay upon the Lord, in distinction from mere pretensions; 2. In distinction from imaginary confidence.[d]

A wonderful conversion.—The most eminent men have generally been distinguished, even in youth, for what has afterwards proved the most prominent features of their character. This was strikingly the case with the late Rev. Dr. M'All, of Manchester. Dr. Raffles, in his funeral sermon, speaking of his youth, says:—"At this period an accident occurred which I cannot forbear to mention, because it marks the vigour of his intellect, and the extent of his information, and the estimation in which, on these accounts, even at that early age, he was held by one well qualified to form an accurate estimate of both. Calling one afternoon on Dr. Olinthus Gregory, at Woolwich, intending to stay a short time and return, the doctor constrained him to remain, saying that he expected some young men, students in the military college, to tea, who were under the influence of infidel principles, and that he knew of no one with whom he was more desirous they should converse upon the points at issue than his youthful visitor. With his characteristic modesty, he shrunk from the proposed interview, and would fain have retired. Dr. Gregory, however, would take no denial, and he at length consented to remain, but only so far to take part in the conversation as that, in the event of Dr. Gregory omitting anything that might seem to him to be material, he would endeavour to supply the deficiency. The expected guests arrived; the subject of Christianity was introduced; its young apologist was induced to speak; and, having once begun, he poured forth such a strain of eloquent and irresistible argumentation, that the conversion of at least two of the party was the happy result."[e]

22, 23. (22) **thy people**, an address to God.[a] **be as the sand**, *i.e.* be now numerous as the sand.[b] **a remnant**, or only a remnant. See Ro. ix. 27. **consumption**, the Divine judgment which will almost sweep away the nation for its iniquities. **with righteousness**, better, in righteousness: it would be righteous judgments, and would accomplish righteous and even gracious ends.[c] (23) **determined**, decreed on good counsel, not any act of mere passion.

Resplendent mercy.—

> High in the airy element there hung
> Another cloudy sea, that did disdain,
> As though his purer waves from heaven sprung,
> To crawl on earth, as doth the sluggish main;
> But it the earth would water with his rain,

a For the expression comp. Sol.'s prayer, 1 Ki. viii. 30, etc.

b Ge. xxii. 17.

c "This judicial visitation will be tempered by love." — *Wordsworth.*

d The meaning is, that the destruction of the great mass of the people would be an event involving an abundant

That ebb'd and flow'd as wind and season would;
And oft the sun would cleave the limber mould
To alabaster rocks, that in the liquid roll'd.

Beneath those sunny banks a darker cloud,
Dropping with thicker dew, did melt apace,
And bent itself into a hollow shroud,
On which, if mercy did but cast her face,
A thousand colours did the bow enchase,
That wonder was to see the silk dis'ain'd
With the resplendence from her beauty gain'd,
And Iris paint her locks with beams so lively feign'd.[d]

24, 25. (24) Here the Prophet returns upon the subject of the Assy. invasion. **not afraid**, bec. he is the agent used by thy God for thy correction, and so is in thy God's hands. **rod . . staff**, the instruments rather of chastisement than of destruction. **manner of Egypt**, recalling to mind how God overruled for His people's good even the sufferings of their time in Egypt. (25) **indignation**, against Israel: and then God would punish those who had been His agents in the chastisement of His people.

Divine deliverance (*v.* 25).—I. The deliverance of God's people is coincident with the destruction of their enemies. II. The reason of this arrangement: their enemies exist as a test, for their instruction, correction. III. The inference deducible from it: when God's people are perfected they will be delivered and their enemies destroyed. IV. The gracious assurance that this shall be speedily accomplished.[a]

Mercy.—

The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown:
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute of God Himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,—
That, in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.[b]

26, 27. (26) **for him**, *i.e.* against him. **slaughter . . Oreb, Ju. vii. 25.**[a] **upon the sea**, to divide it for the passage of His people. (27) **his burden**, that of Assyria. When the Proph. wrote Judah was still tributary to Assyr. **because of the anointing**,[b] or from before the anointing, or the oil of consecration of Jehovah's kings. Reference is prob. to the faithful king Hezekiah, in whose days the deliverance should be wrought.

Divine chastisement (*vv.* 24–27).—They are—I. Tender, "O My

exhibition of God's justice."—*J. A. Alexander.*

"God will justly bring this consumption upon a provoking people, but He will wisely and graciously set bounds to it."—*M. Henry.*

d Giles Fletcher.

"Heaven has but our sorrow for our sins, and then delights to pardon erring man. Sweet mercy seems its darling attribute, which limits justice, as if there were degrees in infinite: an infinite would rather want perfection, than punish to extent."-*Dryden.*

a Dr. Lyth.

A holy life is made up of a number of small things. Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles, nor battles, nor one great heroic act, or mighty martyrdom, make up the true Christian life.

"Life, like a dome of many-colour'd glass, stains the white radiance of eternity."—*Shelley.*

b Shakespeare.

a Isa. ix. 4.

Comp. the slaughter of Oreb and of Sennacherib, 2 Chr. xxxii. 21; Isa. xxxvii. 38; and Ju. vii. 25.

b Or for the sake of the anointing,

which was one seal of the Divine covenant.

The Targum reads—"And the nations shall be broken before the *Messiah*."

The following suggestion, by *Kocher*, is curious—"Whereas yokes are commonly preserved by oil, this shall be destroyed by it."

c Dr. Lyth.

"Mercy, not justice, is the throne of princes. For what is power, though boundless and almighty? A deity of awfulness and fear; but in the whirlwind of its wrath, when flies the burning shaft, if mercy's saving hand arrests its flight, then we kneel and worship, and mix our praise with gratitude and love."—*Francis.*

d Chalmers.

people." II. Merciful, "be not." III. Necessary, "he shall." IV. Of short duration. V. Without partiality. VI. End in deliverance. VII. Because of the anointing, or anointed one.[c]

Results of moral discipline.—The law of habit, when enlisted on the side of righteousness, not only strengthens and makes sure our resistance to vice, but facilitates the most arduous performances of virtue. The man whose thoughts, with the purposes and doings to which they lead, are at the bidding of conscience, will, by frequent repetition, at length describe the same track almost spontaneously,—even as in physical education, things laboriously learnt at the first come to be done at last without the feeling of an effort. And so, in moral education, every new achievement of principle smooths the way to future achievements of the same kind; and the precious fruit or purchase of each moral virtue is to set us on higher and firmer vantage-ground for the conquests of principle in all time coming. He who resolutely bids away the suggestions of avarice, when they come into conflict with the incumbent generosity; or the suggestions of voluptuousness, when they come into conflict with the incumbent self-denial; or the suggestions of anger, when they come into conflict with the incumbent act of magnanimity and forbearance, will at length obtain, not a respite only, but a final deliverance from their intrusion. Conscience, the longer it has made way over the obstacles of selfishness and passion, the less will it give way to these adverse forces, themselves weakened by the repeated defeats which they have sustained in the warfare of moral discipline: or, in other words, the oftener that conscience makes good the supremacy which she claims, the greater would be the work of violence, and less the strength for its accomplishment, to cast her down from that station of practical guidance and command, which of right belongs to her. It is just because, in virtue of the law of suggestion, those trains of thought and feeling, which connect her first biddings with their final execution, are the less exposed at every new instance to be disturbed, and the more likely to be repeated over again, that every good principle is more strengthened by its exercise, and every good affection is more strengthened by its indulgence than before. The acts of virtue ripen into habits: and the goodly and permanent result is, the formation or establishment of a virtuous character.[d]

28, 29. (28) **he is come**, *i.e.* the Assyrian general with his army.[a] This description is ideal or prophetical, it is not to be regarded as historical. "The Prophet sees with an eye illumined by the Holy Spirit."[b] **Aiath**, prob. Ai, 10 miles N. of Jerus. **Migron**, prob. *Makrun*, a little S.E. of Bethel.[c] **Michmash**, some 8 miles N. of Jerus. **carriages**, or baggage; the heavy baggage was left under guard at this point bec. the steep *Wady Suweinit* had to be passed. (29) **passage**, or defile. **Geba**, *etc.*, see Jos. xviii. 21—28; 1 Sa. xiii. 2, 3. "Geba they have made their night-quarters."

Mercy dissolves the heart.—You may have heard of some persons condemned to execution, who at the scaffold have been so obdurate and stiff-necked that not a cry or a tear came from them; yet, just as they have been going to lay their necks upon the block, when a pardon has come, and they were at once discharged from guilt, imprisonment, and death, they that could not weep a tear before, no sooner saw the pardon sealed, and themselves

a "From this v. to the 32nd we have a minute and animated graphic description of the approach of the Assyr. towards Jerusalem, and the consternation into which it threw the inhabitants of those towns wh. lay in their route."—*Henderson.*

b Wordsworth.

c Robinson.

acquitted, than they dissolved into tears of joy, thankfulness, and surprise. So it is with believers. The more they see Christ in the pardon of sin, and the love of God in Christ to receive and embrace them, the more they melt.[d]

30—32. (30) lift up, Heb. *cry shrill.* Gallim, 1 Sa. xxv. 44. Laish, Ju. xviii. 29. But this Laish must have been a village near Jerus. Anathoth, now Anata. 3 miles only fr. Jerus. (31) Madmenah, an unknown village. Gebim, prob. meaning the dwellers in the hills. gather . . flee, hastily collect their property and fly before the enemy.[a] (32) Nob, N.E. of Jerus., on Olivet. and within sight of Jerus. one day, just for resting his soldiers, and preparing for a sudden rush on the city. shake, *etc.*, threatening what he will do, but he will never *do* it.

Note on v. 32.—This is a part of the description of the march of Sennacherib against Jerusalem. When he arrives near the city, he lifts up his hand and shakes it, to denote that he will soon inflict signal punishment upon it. How often may this significant motion of the hand be seen; it is done by lifting it up to the height of the head, and then moving it backward and forward in a cutting direction. Thus, when men are at so great a distance as to be scarcely able to hear each other's voice, they have this convenient way of making known their threatenings. Sometimes, when brawlers have separated, and apparently finished their quarrel, one of them will turn round and bawl out with all his might, and then shake his hand in token of what he will still do.[b]

33, 34. (33) lop . . terror, the fig. of a sudden and fearful destruction of the advancing host. They should come down with a crash, as a lopped bough.[a] The word used signifies "beautiful branches," or "leafy boughs," with special reference to the pride of the officers, boasting of their forced and unopposed march. (34) thickets, referring to the soldiers. Lebanon, *comp.* Ez. xxxi. 3 : 2 Ki. xix. 23. a mighty one, either meaning *mightily*, or "by One who is indeed a glorious one."

Pride humbled.—God, in fact, deals with men as Jesus dealt on Galilee with Peter. Impetuous, self-satisfied, puffed up with vanity, to parade his power and prove his superiority to the other disciples. Peter will walk the sea. His Master allows him to try it. He bids him come; not that He may drown Simon, but only Simon's pride. Boldly he ventures on the water. The liquid element feels firm beneath his feet. He begins to walk; but, alarmed at his new position as he rises and falls with the swell of the waves, he begins to fear, and, like a cause which is lost for want of courage, he begins to sink lower and lower; still he sinks, till the water rises chill upon his heart, and kisses his drowning lip. He feels himself in the cold embraces of death. Terror masters shame, and, stretching out his arms to Christ, he cries, "Lord, save me, I perish." Painful but profitable lesson! His danger and failure have taught him his weakness. Now to such a state, and confession, all who are to be saved must first be brought.[b]—*Dare to be true.*—

Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie.
A fault which needs it most grows two thereby.[c]

d Tobias Crisp.

a "Showing what imminent danger Jerusalem was in, when its enemies made so many bold advances towards it, and its friends could not make one bold stand to defend it."—*M. Henry.*

The glory of this passing scene is not unlike a sunbeam dancing on the top of a wave; it is very beautiful, but very transient.

b Roberts.

a For fig. of Assyria as lofty tree comp. Eze. xxxi. 5, 6, 8, 12, 13.

"God was wroth with the angels, and drove them out of heaven. God was wroth with Adam, and thrust him out of paradise. God was wroth with Nebuchadnezzar, and turned him out of his palace. God was wroth with Cain, and though he was the first man born of a woman, yet God made him a vagabond upon his own land. God was wroth with Saul, and though he was the first king that ever was anointed, yet God made his own hand his executioner."—*Henry Smith.*

b Dr. Guthrie.
c Herbert.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1. **rod . . stem**, the fig. of a sucker fr. the root of the tree of Israel is contrasted with the destruction of the tree of Assyr., from it no sucker will arise.[a] Israel is *a vine*, fr. wh. new suckers may spring up. **stem of Jesse**, or hewn-down stock of Jesse.[b] Comp. the depressed condition of Jesse's descendants when Jesus was born. **branch**, Heb. *Netser*. with poss. ref. to Natsareth, where Jesus was brought up. **grow . . roots**, or "out of his roots shall be fruitful."

The stem from the rod of Jesse (*vv.* 1—9).—That this refers to the Lord is undoubted. Note—I. His descent. 1. Meanness or obscurity; 2. Progression: 3. Secret and mysterious operation. II. His personal and official endowments. 1. Their nature; 2. Their range; 3. Their durability; 4. Their purposes, that He might discriminate the characters of men, to defend the cause of the oppressed, to punish the workers of iniquity. III. The blessed state of things which will be realised under His administration. 1. The condition described; 2. The transformations effected; 3. The means of it.[c]

Immanuel.—The following phrases, as gathered from the Scriptures, may serve to illustrate this view of Christ. He is spoken of as "Jehovah: as Jehovah of glory; as Jehovah our Righteousness; as Jehovah above all as Jehovah, the First and the Last; as Jehovah's Fellow and Equal; as Jehovah of hosts: as Jehovah of David; as Jehovah the Shepherd; as Jehovah for whose glory all things were created; as Jehovah the Messenger of the Covenant: invoked as Jehovah; as the Eternal God and Creator; as the Mighty God; as the Great God and Saviour; as God over all; as the True God; as God the Word; as God the Judge: as Immanuel; as King of kings and Lord of lords; as the Holy One; as the Lord from heaven; as the Lord of the Sabbath; as Lord of all; as Son of God; as the Only Begotten Son of the Father: His blood is called the blood of God: as One with the Father; as sending the Spirit equally with the Father; as entitled to equal honour with the Father; as Owner of all things equally with the Father; as unrestricted by the law of the Sabbath equally with the Father; as unsearchable equally with the Father; as Creator of all things; as Supporter and Preserver of all things; as possessed of the fulness of the Godhead; as raising the dead; as raising Himself from the dead; as Eternal; as Omnipresent; as Omnipotent; as Omniscient; as discerning the thoughts of the heart; as Unchangeable; as having power to forgive sins; as Giver of pastors to the Church; as Husband of the Church; as the Object of Divine worship; as the Object of faith; as God, He redeems and purifies the Church unto Himself; as God, He presents the Church unto Himself; Saints live unto Him as God."[e]

2, 3. (2) **rest**, or permanently abide. In Christ dwells "the fulness of the Godhead bodily."[a] **wisdom and understanding**, wisdom the special gift of the ruler, as called to judge difficult cases: understanding, or keen, quick discernment. **counsel**, the power to form wise plans. **might**, the faculty of carrying plans into execution. **knowledge**, practical acquaint-

[a] The cedar is a pine, and all pines, when cut to the ground, are incapable of sending up suckers.

"Herodotus has a story of Cræsus having threatened to destroy the men of Lampsacus 'like a pine tree,' whereat they were much perplexed, until an old man remarked that 'of all trees, the pine, when it is once cut down, never grows again, but utterly perishes.'" — *Spk. Com.*

[b] "To further indicate its mean condition, the name of David, wh. would have suggested notions of dignity and splendour, is suppressed, and that of his father Jesse is employed, wh. conveys the ideas of rustic simplicity and obscurity." —*Henderson.*

[c] *Dr. Lyth.*

You will never go out of yourself to Christ for safety, till you see the danger of remaining in yourself.

[d] *J. Bate.*

[e] Col. ii. 9.

"The person whose origin and descent are metaphorically described in the preceding verse,

ance with the will of God. fear, that disposition wh. keeps us ever anxious to be doing God's will. (3) understanding, or smell, the faculty of discernment. after the sight, wh. may deceive, but by the insight of motives wh. alone reveals the truth.[b]

Gifts of Christ to His Church (*v.* 2).—I shall—I. Call attention to the particulars described of spiritual influence on Christ. 1. He had the spirit of wisdom and understanding; 2. Of counsel and might; 3. Of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. II. Show how the graces of spiritual influence flow from Christ to His people. 1. They first descended upon the Apostles; 2. On the multitudes at the preaching of the Word; 3. These rich streams are not exhausted.[c]

Power of Christ's teaching.—The truths revealed in the life and teachings of Christ are of sovereign power, and are the most influential upon the motives and the conduct of human life. They go to the very root of moral consciousness. They reveal human character by applying to it a standard higher than any that was ever before applied to it. They define and mark the nature of sin in human conduct. They establish obligations upon immutable grounds, leaving them not to the shifting ingenuity of human reason, but imposing them according to Divine principles. They reveal the infinite reach of moral conduct and its eternal consequences. Thus they reveal to man the nature of himself, the nature of the government under which he lives, the nature of God, and the nature of immortality.[d]

4, 5. (4) righteousness, the "right" irrespective of persons and conditions: absolute right. judge, take into consideration. E. judges too often slight the causes of the poor, bec. they cannot bribe or pay. reprove, better, *decide*, as judge. equity, or the right as between man and man. meek, those unable or unwilling to press their case,[a] Mat. v. 5. the earth,[b] *i.e.* the ungodly, or earthly. rod . . mouth, his sentence of judgment. (5) girdle, "the symbol of vigorous unimpeded development of strength."[c] faithfulness, truth in keeping promises.

The effects of Christianity upon human society (*vv.* 4—9).—I. How far is it the object of the Gospel to improve the social state? II. What are the social tendencies of Christianity? III. What have been its actual achievements?[d]

Christ the power of the world.—Christ walked like a shadow in His day; and if you had asked at that time, "Where are the secrets of power in the world?" any Jew would have pointed to the old temple, and said, "There are the secrets of the world's power." If, as he said it, you had seen some Greek smiling, and you had asked him, "Where is the secret of power in the world?" he would have said, "Have you been in Athens? Have you seen her temples and statues? Have you seen the Parthenon? Have you seen her art and read her literature? Have you entered into the depths of the learning of her Plato and Aristotle? The world's history is wrapped up in Athenian art and literature." And if, while he yet spoke, a disdaining Roman had passed by, and you had followed him and said, "Wherefore that smile?" he would have said, "The Jews and the Greeks are filled with superstitions, and are blinded as to the true source of the world's power. That power is centred in Rome, whose greatness is unequalled by that of any other nation on the globe." And how is here described by his personal qualities, as one endowed with the highest intellectual and moral gifts by the direct influences of the Holy Spirit." — *J. A. Alexander.*

b "Christ, the Judge of all, will have no respect of persons in judging..... He will examine the heart and pronounce His judicial sentence accordingly." — *Wordsworth.*

c J. Ayre, M.A.

Christ is before God for me; I am before the world for Christ.

d H. W. Beecher.

a "The poor, who have no means of commending themselves to the eye; the meek, in whose mouth are no eloquent self-vindications to win the ear." —*Spk. Com.*

b "Regarded as the territory of the world that is hostile to God." —*Nägelsbach.*

c Eph. vi. 14; see Ps. xciii. 1.

"The girdle is mentioned as an essential part of Oriental dress, and that which keeps the others in proper place, and qualifies the wearer for exertion."—*J. A. Alexander.*

d J. Styles, D.D.

The death of Christ was a greater and more costly sacrifice than if the whole human family had perished

eternally; the reason is, that it was not that of a mere man, but of God-man in one Person.

e H. W. Beecher.

would Jew, and Greek, and Roman have joined in mirthful derision if you had pointed to that person, Jesus Christ, who was to be crucified, and said, "In that man is the secret of the whole world's power." But the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, with their philosophies, their governments, and their power, have gone down, while this shadow has risen into greater and greater power, until it fills the world.[e]

6, 7. (6) wolf . . lamb, "each animal is coupled with that one wh. is its natural prey."[a] The figures do not indicate that the natural characteristics of the wild and tame animals will be changed. They represent dispositions in men. lie down, *i.e.* in the same pastures.[b] little child, they will be so meek as not to need even a strong man's restraints. (7) lion . . straw, denoting a total change of habit, that may fitly represent the change wrought by Gospel conversion in man and society.[c]

The touchstone of regeneration (*vv.* 6—9).—The marks of this change are—I. Harmlessness. 1. We would not do evil though we might do it unseen of any creature; 2. Though we have provocation, we will abstain from doing evil. II. Sociableness. 1. No man can love a saint, as a saint, but a saint. III. Constancy. IV. Inwardness. V. Tractableness. VI. Simplicity. Uses:—1. Consolation; 2. Exhortation.[d]—*Sketch of juvenile missionary sermon* (*v.* 6).—Chapter contains a prophecy about Jesus, written 700 years before Jesus was born. God taught the writer. He knows the past and future better than we know the present. A part of the prediction (*vv.* 1—5) has happened; part is happening now (*vv.* 6—9). We are concerned in it. If we do our part well, the rest by God's blessing will come to pass in due time. Two strange things in the text. 1. Different animals living peaceably together. Figurative language. Explain: these animals stand for different sorts of people. We sometimes use such language (ill. savage as a bear, sly as a fox, merry as a cricket, gay as a lark, blind as a mole, etc.). The text teaches that the Gospel and grace of Christ bring together people of different dispositions, and enable them to live in peace with each other. 2. Another strange thing is the little child leading them. Our subject is, The influence, in Gospel times, of little children. I. In Sunday schools little children are drawing together—leading, as teachers and supporters, those who, but for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, would never be drawn to such places nor help in such causes. (The writer knew in one place a prizefighter, and in another place a smuggler and poacher, who being converted were drawn to the school and became teachers.) People who differ in opinion and pursuit are thus brought together and united in purpose and labour. II. In mission fields little children are leading men in two ways. 1. Heathen children are, by their sad state, touching Christian hearts and drawing some as missionaries over the water to help them, and others to support the cause of missions; 2. Christian children are drawing savage people into peaceful union, by means of the missionaries they send out, and the ships, etc., they purchase. (Ill. a child leads a pet lamb with a cord; the missionary is a cord with which a child leads a savage to the feet of Jesus.) III. In their own homes little children are leading. Many, for the sake of children, attend places of worship and give up sin. (Ill. a little girl, on her death-bed, asked her father to spell repentance; it led to his repentance. Another

a "These may be figures for *men* of corresponding animal-like characters."—*Faussett.*

"The Prophet furnishes a description of the peace and happiness to be enjoyed under the reign of Messiah, wh., for boldness and exquisite choice of imagery, far surpasses the sublimest passages in which the classical poets celebrate the renewal of the golden age."—*Henderson.*

b "While the wolf, as a rule, attacks sheepfolds, a leopard can follow the goat along precipices where no wolf would venture, and the lion will carry off oxen, which neither leopard nor wolf could move."—*J. G. Wood.*

c Col. iii. 12, 13.

d R. Sibbes.

"Our children that die young are like those spring bulbs which have their flowers prepared before hand, and have nothing to do but to break ground, and blossom, and pass away. Thank God for spring flowers among men, as well as among the grasses of the field."—*H. W. Beecher.*

asked her father to give up drink; he did so, and became a Christian; "Father, come home," etc.) Now we want all of you to be leaders. In order to this, four things are needful. 1. Piety: you must be in the right way yourselves; the good man not only pointed to heaven, but led the way; 2. Pity: this may be excited by considering the pity of Jesus, and also how the way ends that sinners are walking; 3. Prayerfulness: your effort is nothing unless God bless it; He can make the weakest effort strong enough; 4. Perseverance: you should never give up trying to do good, nor ever run away from duty. Among the prisoners taken at the battle of Waterloo was a Highland piper. Napoleon, struck with his appearance, asked him to play on his instrument. "Play a pibroch," said Napoleon, and the Highlander played it. "Play a march." It was done. "Play a retreat." "Na, na," said the Highland boy: "I never learned to play a retreat." Now we like the spirit and reply of this noble boy; all boys and girls who are engaged in a good work we advise to take "no retreat" as their motto.[e]

The two mothers and the babe.—A young and beautiful woman, already a wife and mother, was living with her infant in a retired village in one of the remote provinces of France. Her husband and his father were both in Paris. During the disturbances which took place previous to the execution of the king, the father, having too openly expressed his opinions, was thrown into prison, and it was expected his son would share his fate. On receiving these sad tidings the lady quitted her retreat, leaving her child to the care of a faithful friend. On reaching Paris, she sought the presence of the judges, and earnestly entreated them to pardon her father; but they were inexorable. Being at this moment deprived of the assistance of her husband, who had been obliged to fly, her perplexity was extreme, though her courage even then did not fail. Finding her efforts for the captive's deliverance of no avail, she petitioned for leave to share the prison of the venerable old man; touched by her devotion, the tribunal allowed her to spend several hours every day with the captive. She came like a sunbeam in his solitary cell, cheering his spirits with hope for the future. When the day of trial arrived, his daughter-in-law was permitted to attend him, and for three days sat at his feet,—on the third he was condemned and taken back to prison. The lady made her way through the crowd until she reached the top of a flight of stone steps leading from the hall to the street. On her arrival at this spot she became alarmed at perceiving a crowd of excited women with children in their arms, who, on seeing her about to descend, cried out, "Behold the daughter of a traitor!" Remembering that on that very spot the Princess de Lambella had been savagely murdered, she became terrified; but it was only for a moment. Observing a young woman with an infant in her arms, she met her halfway, saying, "What a fine child you have." The woman looked at her for an instant, and, presenting her babe, said, "Take it; and when you are in safety, return it to me." The lady took the child, and pressing it to her breast, walked down the steps. The crowd opened to let her pass; and, as if guarded by some invisible hand, she crossed the street in safety. As soon as the mother saw she had escaped the danger, she reclaimed her child; no words were spoken, but the women understood each other.[f]

At a recent preacher's meeting the query was started as to the ages at which the different ministers present were converted. It was ascertained upon inquiry that of those present twenty were converted under fourteen years of age; twenty-two under eighteen; thirteen under twenty-one; and four over twenty-one.

e The Hive.

"There is something exceedingly thrilling in the voices of children singing. Though their music be unskilful, yet it finds its way to the heart with wonderful celerity. Voices of cherubs are they, for they breathe of Paradise; clear, liquid tones, that flow from pure lips and innocent hearts, like the sweetest notes of a flute, or the falling of water from a fountain!" — *Longfellow.*

"Do not command children under six years of age to keep anything secret, not even the pleasure you may be preparing as a surprise for a dear friend. The cloudless heaven of youthful openheartedness should not be overcast, not even by the rosy dawn of shyness —otherwise children will soon learn to conceal their own secrets as well as yours." —*Richter.*

f Paxton Hood.

8, 9. (8) **suckling child**, quite the infant: type of most perfect innocence. **asp**, poss. the cobra:[a] certainly a poisonous serpent. **cockatrice**, the great viper:[b] or basilisk.[c] (9) **hurt nor destroy**, the things indicated by wild beast and serpent. **holy mountain**, Zion regarded as the seat of the Church, and so put for Christ's Church. **knowledge**, *etc.*, *i.e.* the knowledge of His righteous, peaceful, and beneficent rule.[d] The expression indicates also submission to that rule. **the sea**, poetical for the *bed of the sea*. This promise has not yet been fulfilled.

The millennial glory.—

The animals, as once in Eden, lived
In peace. The wolf dwelt with the lamb, the bear
And leopard with the ox. With looks of love,
The tiger and the scaly crocodile
Together met, at Gambia's palmy wave.
Perched on the eagle's wing, the bird of song,
Singing, arose, and visited the sun;
And with the falcon sat the gentle lark.
The little child leaped from his mother's arms,
And stroked the crested snake, and rolled unhurt
Among his speckled waves, and wished him home;
And sauntering schoolboys, slow returning, played
At eve about the lion's den, and wove
Into his shaggy mane fantastic flowers.
To meet the husbandman, early abroad,
Hasted the deer, and waved its woody head;
And round his dewy steps, the hare, unscared,
Sported, and toyed familiar with his dog.
The flocks and herds o'er hill and valley spread,
Exulting cropped the ever-budding herb.
The desert blossomed, and the barren sung;
Justice and mercy, holiness and love,
Among the people walked; Messiah reigned,
And earth kept jubilee a thousand years.[e]

10. **root of Jesse**, *v.* 1, the stock rising up from the mere root wh. seemed lifeless. **ensign**, round wh. they may gather, as a banner is the rallying-point of an army. Comp. our Lord's word, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."[a] **Gentiles**, nations other than the Jews.[b] **rest**, or resting-place. The place of Messiah's dwelling is His Church. **glorious**, Heb. *glory*: an abstract for a concrete. Reference is to its glory by reason of the accession of the Gentiles.[c]

The holy war (*v.* 10).—Our Lord as an ensign—1. Musters His forces for the battle; 2. Marches with His forces to the battle; 3. Mingles with His forces in the battle.[d]

The flag of England.—On the 12th of April, 1606. the Union Jack—the flag that has waved in so many bloody and victorious battles by sea and shore—first made its appearance. From Rymer's *Fœdera*, and the Annals of Sir James Balfour, Lord Lyon King of Arms, we learn that some differences having arisen between ships of the two countries at sea, His Majesty ordained that a new flag be adopted, with the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George interlaced, by placing the latter fimbriated on the blue flag of Scotland as the ground thereof. This flag all ships were to carry at their main-top; but English ships were to display St. George's red cross at their sterns, and the Scottish the white

a Tristram.

b "The meaning is, a generation of vipers shall become a seed of saints, and the old complaint, *homo homini lupus*—man is a wolf to man—shall be at an end."—*M. Henry.*

c "The cerast, or horned serpent—a small viper, little more than a foot in length, so called from the feelers which are protruded fr. its head, while it lies hid in the sand. It is exceedingly venomous."—*Michael.s.*

d Ha. ii. 14.

"A living, experimental, practical knowledge of God."—*Nägelsbuch.*

Christ has a greater interest in you than you have in Him.

e Pollok.

a Jno. xii. 32.

b Ro. xv. 12; Ac. x. 45, 46, xxviii. 28.

c "The glorious Church which is to be is described under the image of an oracle to which all nations shall resort, and which shall be filled with the visible glory of God."—*Fausset.*

"The Church, though despised by the world, having upon it the beauty of holiness, is truly glorious."—*Mat. Henry.*

d F. W. Brown.

saltire of St. Andrew. The Union Jack, however, was not adopted by the troops of either country till their Parliamentary union, in 1707. In Munro's account of the expedition with Mackay's regiment in Denmark, he states that in 1626 the Scots in the Danish army persisted in carrying their national flag, and refused to place the Danish cross upon it.[e]

11—13. (11) second time, differences of opinion prevail as to the meaning of this term. Some think the Exodus was the first time: others regard the return from Babylon as the first. Others think the beginning of the fulfilment was the day of Pentecost, when men fr. all countries were converted.[a] recover, or purchase. Pathros, Upper Egypt. Cush, Ethiopia.[b] Elam, Elymais, in S. Media.[c] Shinar, land on the Euphrates and Tigris. Hamath, in Syria; N. foot of Lebanon. islands, of the Mediterranean.[d] (12) ensign, *see v.* 10. corners, or wings. (13) envy, wh. kept up separation bet. the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.[e] The tribal distinctions have now passed away.

The restoration of Israel (*vv.* 11—16).—I. Yet future, they are redeemed the second time, out of all nations; the promise includes both Judah and Israel. II. Connected with the spread of the Gospel. III. Results in the union of Israel and Judah in one kingdom. IV. Followed by the destruction of their enemies. V. The whole effected by the special interposition of God, and possibly accompanied by miraculous proofs of His power.[f]

Castle Duard.—On the south-eastern promontory of the Island of Mull stands the ancient war-tower, or Castle of Duard. A few years ago it had, and may yet have, affixed to it a flag-staff, on which the proprietor, the late Colonel Campbell, of Possil and Auchnacrosh, occasionally hoisted a flag for various peaceful purposes. One of these was to summon the people in the parish of Torosay, in which Duard Castle is situated, to church on certain Sabbath days. When the minister of Torosay happened to be from home, without being able to obtain a preacher to take his place, it was agreed between him and the proprietor of Duard, that if, as sometimes happened in the summer season, a preacher should unexpectedly appear, and be willing to preach, intimation of this should be given to the surrounding population by hoisting the flag on the castle on Sabbath morning, and leaving it to wave till the commencement of public worship. This gave rise to the following verses, written by a minister who lived on the opposite shore on the mainland, and from which, with a telescope, he could see the flag waving on these occasions in the wind:—

"On the war-tower of Duard the banner is spread,
But it is not the banner of terror and dread;
It sends the far summons o'er mountain and heath,
But it is not the summons of onset and death.

"It calls not the chieftain to gird on his might,
To send forth the war-cry and arm for the fight;
It calls not each clansman, in martial array,
From his home and his kindred to hasten away.

"It calls not the mother in sadness to mourn
O'er the child of her hope who may never return;
It calls not the widow, in foreboding of fear,
O'er the fatherless orphan to shed forth the tear.

When God gave us Christ, He gave us all gifts in one.

e British Battles.

a Wordsworth, etc.

b i.e. Nubia and Abyssinia.

c Or Persia.

d Ps. lxxii. 10; Jer. ii. 10; Est. x. 1.

e "This was one of the happy effects of the Assyrian and Chaldæan captivities; they put an end to the rivalry between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah."—*Wordsworth.*

Eze. xxxvii. 15—19.

f Dr. Lyth.

The little child goes out to gather a bouquet of flowers to present to his father. But he gathers weeds and fading flowers along with the fair and fragrant ones. Bringing them to his mother, she rejects all but the most beautiful, and binds them together, a lovely offering. So Christ casts out the weeds, the sin in our prayers, and presents only the flowers to His Father, as a sweet-smelling savour.

"How delightful this Bible looks to me when I see the blood of Christ sprinkled upon it! Every leaf would have flashed with Sinai's lightnings and every verse would have rolled with the thun-

ders of Horeb, if it had not been for Calvary's cross. Now, as you look you see on every page your Saviour's name. He loved you, and gave Himself for you." —*Spurgeon.*

> "For the banner that waves is the banner of peace,
> And the tidings it bears are the tidings of grace;
> In the stillness of Sabbath it is waving abroad,
> To assemble His creatures to worship their God.
>
> "Oh, thus may each banner of discord and strife
> Yet send forth the tidings of gladness and life,
> Thus calling on mankind, with joyful accord,
> To appear at His altar, and worship the Lord."

14—16. (14) **fly**, *etc.*, from these regions mentioned in v. 11, esp. from the island. **upon the shoulder**,[a] *i.e.* to the shoulder, or frontier district of Palestine, wh. was occupied by the Philistines. **toward the west**, or westward. **spoil . . east**, the Ishmaelites, Medianites, etc. (15) **tongue**, *etc., gulf of Suez*, perhaps recalling God's previous deliverance, to intimate the wonderful things He would do again. **shake . . hand**, sign of threatening and commmand. **in seven**, better, into seven mere streams.[b] **dryshod**, or, even in sandals. (16) **highway**, or road clear of obstructions.

Harsh discipline the way to joy.—A little child, dropped as a waif in New York, alas! made beautiful, now coming to be thirteen or fourteen years of age, without friends, and with many that have lustful eyes upon her, is met by the gracious missionary at the "Five Points." And he beholds her, and his heart yearns toward her. He finds out where she lives in her little chamber, as yet not quite fallen, not quite overborne, yet coarse and rude and already beginning to love the taste of the poison of flattery, already beginning to listen willingly, already beginning to calculate and to throb evil thoughts. He looks upon her, and is sad for her. While others would open her chamber door and endeavour to persuade her to dismiss her industry; while others say to her, "Go, flutter, and be gay: take life and enjoy it while you may," he loves her more than they do. They love as the swine loves the husk, which he chews for the juice, and spits out a rejected cud; but he loves that child with the consciousness of what her immortality is, of what is the treasure of the riches that is in her, if only it can be saved and educated. And he would shut the door. They would open it. He would rather see her weep. They would rather see her laugh. He would rather see her suffer, and go poorly clad. They would be glad if she would take temptation under the proffer of ribbons and jewellery. They would be glad to see her dressed in all these gewgaw trifles. He, gaining influence with her, seems to her, in her moments of temptation, like a hard master. And yet, tell me, if it was your child, and if, after years had passed by, you found that this wanderer from your house had been saved by this missionary, and brought up in cramped circumstances, and familiar with poverty, and that he had been a faithful teacher to her, so that at length, when she reached her majority, she was still a virtuous woman, and beginning to love virtue more than vice, would you not say that he had been the truest sympathiser? And who would sympathise most with you? Would it be that "indulgent deity" who should make the present hour pleasant to you, and leave you to the waste of an eternal undoing? or would it be One who loved you so much that He was willing to administer discipline and watching and pain, and wring tears,

[a] "The Heb. for shoulder is in Nu. xxxiv. 11, used also of a maritime coast." —*Fausset.*

[b] "The sense is, that the Heb. preachers of the Gospel will fly from Jerusalem with eager activity upon Philistia to convert it, as an eagle pounces upon the shoulder of a sheep or other animal, its prey. See Ac. viii. 26—40, ix. 32—43." —*Wordsworth.*

"The prophecy was fulfilled, as regards Philistia, when the returned captives under Antiochus Epiphanes and Jonathan, etc., secured the seaboard of Canaan." —*Henderson.*

b The idea of the v. is that the limits and barriers of heathen nations being broken down, there should be free access for the Gospel everywhere.

"'My burden is light.' A light burden indeed, wh. carries him that bears it. I have looked through all nature for a resemblance of this, and I seem to find a shadow of it in the wings of a bird, which are indeed borne by the creature,

that through those tears He might open the fountain of future joys? Is not that the divinest and truest sympathy? Are there any of us that do not need just such a friend as this in Jesus Christ?[c]

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

1—3. (1) **that day**, of recovery and triumph for the Church. **wast angry**, so as to set me under chastisement.[a] (2) **my salvation**, tracing the deliverance wholly to His providence and grace. **Lord Jehovah**, Heb. *Yah-Yahveh*. a reduplication of the sacred covenant name (ch. xxvi. 4). **strength**, *etc.*, Ex. xv. 2; Ps. cxviii. 14. (3) **with joy**, produced by such perfect trust. **draw water**, expressive image in a hot country.[b] **wells**, ever-flowing fountains.

Elim (*vv.* 1—3).—In this wilderness are wells, or fountains, from whence we may receive strength and comfort. Let us show—I. To what the privilege is traceable. 1. To the reconciliation affected by the Mediator; 2. To the penitence and faith of the recipent. II. In what the privilege consists. 1. God's unmerited yet abundant love to sinners; 2. The everlasting nature of the promises of God; 3. The finished work and constant intercession of our Lord Jesus; 4. The descriptions of the final home of the saints; 5. The presence and rich grace of the Holy Spirit. III. How the privilege should be regarded. To embrace it eagerly, we must have—1. The vessel of faith; 2. The chain of prayer. IV. In what manner the privilege should be embraced. "With joy." 1. Instance several considerations to lead to this joyous state of heart; 2. Show after what manner this joy should be expressed.[c]

The wells of salvation.—It is said that while the French engineers were boring for water in the African desert, the Arabs looked on in silent wonder, until they saw the precious stream actually gushing forth, and then their joy knew no bounds; and sweet and precious as the cooling waters are now to the weary, labouring child of the desert, so precious were they to the people to whom the words of the Prophet were originally addressed; and the promise to them of an indefinite supply of that element would be highly appreciated by them, and well calculated to inspire their gratitude and joy.[d]

4, 5. (4) **praise**, give thanks to; the proper mode of expressing trust. **call upon**, or proclaim.[a] (5) **excellent things**, *i.e.* He hath wrought triumphantly. **known**, *i.e.* it should be known, it is worthy to be known.

Joy of communion with Christ.—No sooner do you pass the brow of the St. Gothard pass, on your way to Italy, than you perceive that, beyond all question, you are on the sunny side of the Alps. The snow lying there is nothing in comparison to the vast accumulation upon the Swiss side of the summit, the wind ceases to be sharp and cutting, and a very few minutes' ride brings you into a balmy air which makes you forget that you are so greatly elevated above the sea level. There is a very manifest difference between the southern side and the bleak northern aspect. He who climbs above the cares of the world, and turns his face to his God, has found the sunny side of life. The world's side of the hill is chill and freezing to a spiritual mind, but the

and yet support his flight towards heaven." — *Bernard.*

c *H. W. Beecher.*

a "God's people can truly thank Him even for His severe discipline, which would not let them glide on smoothly to ruin. His wrath was but 'the jealousy' of true love."—*Spk. Com.*

Ro. vi. 17.

b Jno. vii. 2, 37-39.

c *Stems and Twigs.*

"Thus, Christ died on Calvary about the same hour of the day that the Paschal lamb was offered in the temple, so that the substance and the shadow correspond, and meet in that wonderful hour when Christ cried, 'It is finished.'" — *Jacobus.*

d *Lessons from Jesus.*

a See 1 Chr. xvi. 8. "A large house consists of a variety of materials, rooms, and accommodation; it was built by a variety of workmen; it will contain a variety of persons in the family that occupy it. Yet it is one building: the workmen had one aim; the family is one household. So with the Church of Christ. It has many sections; it is built

of many nations, and by many agencies; it exists in many ages; but with all this variety there is only one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one Spirit, making the *one Church.*" — *John Bate.*

b C. H. Spurgeon.

Lord's presence gives a warmth of joy which turns winter into summer. Some pilgrims to heaven appear never to have passed the summit of religious difficulty; they are still toiling over the Devil's Bridge, or loitering at Andermatt, or plunging into the deep snowdrifts of their own personal unworthiness, ever learning, but never coming to a full knowledge of the truth; they have not attained to a comfortable perception of the glory, preciousness, and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus, and therefore abide amid the winter of their doubts and fears. If they had but faith to surmount their spiritual impediments, how changed would everything become! It is fair travelling with a sunny land smiling before your eyes, especially when you retain a grateful remembrance of the bleak and wintry road which you have traversed; but it is sorry work to be always stopping on the Swiss side of the mountain. How is it that so many do this?[b]

6. **inhabitant**, fem. *inhabitress*, the Church dwelling in Zion, daughter of Zion.[a] **midst of thee**, Zech. iii. 15, 17.

The duty of gladness (*v.* 6).—Note two things: the person addressed, the admonition given. I. The truth upon which the admonition is founded. This includes—1. The character: 2. The greatness: 3. And residence of God, who is in the midst of His people universally, socially, individually. II. The exhortation enjoined. It teaches two things. 1. That as religion has to do with the feelings, it is absurd to place it in forms, etc.; 2. That religion is not only animated but rational, a reasonable service, etc.[b]

Benefit of communion.—God is a centre to the soul; and just as in a circle what is nearest the centre is subject to least motion, so the closer the soul is to God, the less the movement and agitation to which it is exposed. Make the experiment upon a level area: sink a staff into the ground, attach to it a line, and around it as a centre describe a circle of considerable extent; then bid some friend walk round that circle while you do the same round another drawn at a short distance from the staff. You will find that your friend will have to walk long and fast to accomplish his task, but that a few steps will be enough for yours. It is the same with the soul. The greater its distance from God and from spiritual and heavenly things, the wider the circuit it will have to make, the faster it will have to speed without knowing why, and the more will it seek, but be unable to find rest. He, however, who by devotion and faith, love and resignation, keeps as near as possible to God, finds that which his heart desires.[c]

[a] "All honour and all salvation of Zion rest in this, that it has the Lord in the midst of it as its living and personal shield and fountain of life." —*Nägelsbach.*

"It is the honour and happiness of Israel that the God who is in covenant with them, and in the midst of them, is infinitely great." —*M. Henry.*

b W. Jay.

If you never felt the sweetness of love to Christ in your heart, it is unlikely that you will feel any regret about the absence of it.

c Gotthold.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1. **Babylon**, a weighty or mournful prophecy is called a *burden*,[a] see, in prophetic vision.

Typical burdens (*v.* 1).—I. The burden of Babylon, the doom of the empire of force. II. The burden of Egypt, the doom of craft and false wisdom. III. The burden of Tyre, the doom of unhallowed commerce: these burdens are illustrations of principles in themselves, they are also true of the Church.[b]

Babylon.—1. Name of place afterwards called Babylon was Babel = confusion (Ge. xi. 8, 9), or gate of Il, a Babylonian deity. 2. Situation: on the river Euphrates (Ge. xi. 31, *cf.* Jer. xxiv. 2,

[a] Heb. *massa.* See 2 Ki. ix. 25.

b Paxton Hood.

The ground, league beyond league, like one great cemetery is covered o'er with mouldering monuments; and let the living wander where

3), *q. v.* about 300 miles from the mouth. 3. Description: if accounts of ancient writers (as Herodotus, Ctesias) are to be believed, it must have been of wonderful size and beauty. In shape, square; 120 furlongs each way. Walls 50 cubits thick, and 200 high (Jer. li. 53—58): "Upon the top of walls, and along the edges of them, they constructed buildings of a single chamber, facing one another, leaving room between for a four-horse chariot to turn. 100 brazen gates; houses three or four stories high. Taking the least of ancient measurements, Babylon must have = four or five times the size of London." 4. Bible references: origin (Ge. x. 8, 10) ancient (xi. 4, 9); enlarged by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 30); golden city (Is. xiv. 4); glory of kingdoms, and beauty, Chaldæans (Is. xiii. 19); city of merchants (Ez. xvii. 4); Babylon the great (Dan. iv. 30), noted for antiquity (Jer. v. 15), naval power (Is. xliii. 14), military power (Jer. v. 16, l. 23), wealth (Jer. l. 37, li. 13), commerce (Ez. xvii. 4), manufactures (Jos. vii. 21), wisdom (Is. xlvii. 10; Jer. l. 35), people idolatrous (Jer. l. 38; Dan. iii. 18), loved magic (Is. xlvii. 9, 12, 13; Dan. ii. 1, 2), wicked (Is. xlvii. 10; Dan. v. 1—3). 5. Present state of Babylon. Nothing remains but mounds of rubbish, and heaps of bricks covered with arrow-head characters. Already the investigations of Rawlinson, and others, have thrown much light on its ancient history, and strikingly confirmed the Scripture narrative. It is believed that other and far more wonderful discoveries are on the eve of being made. Sir H. Rawlinson promises to submit evidence that Eden was the old and original name of Babylon, that he has found the four rivers mentioned by the same names, that he has come upon accounts of the Flood, and tower of Babel, which bear with singular directness and value upon the Bible narratives.[c]

2, 3. (2) **lift . . mountain,**[a] *i.e.* raise the standard in a conspicuous place. **shake the hand,** as giving the signal of attack. **gates . . nobles,** gates of the palace, where the princes were riotously feasting when their desolation came.[b] (3) **sanctified ones,** my warriors called and set apart for this particular work of retribution. **for mine anger,** *i.e.* to execute Mine anger. **rejoice,** *etc.*, gladly work out My purpose.[c] Some read this sentence as "My exulters of pride," and think it refers to the pride and exclusiveness of the Persians.

Admonition should be gentle.—We must consult the gentlest manner and softest seasons of address; our advice must not fall like a violent storm, bearing down and making those to droop whom it is meant to cherish and refresh. It must descend, as the dew upon the tender herb, or like melting flakes of snow; the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon and the deeper it sinks into the mind. If there are few who have the humility to receive advice as they ought, it is often because there are few who have the discretion to convey it in a proper vehicle, and to qualify the harshness and bitterness of reproof, against which corrupt nature is apt to revolt, by an artful mixture of sweetening and agreeable ingredients. To probe the wound to the bottom with all the boldness and resolution of a good spiritual surgeon, and yet with all the delicacy and tenderness of a friend, requires a very dexterous and masterly hand. An affable deportment and a complacency of behaviour will disarm the most obstinate; whereas, if instead of calmly pointing out their mistake, we

they will, they cannot leave the footsteps of the dead.

When the Spanish mariners were traversing the seas upon voyages of discovery they never touched upon new land, whether an insignificant island or a part of the main continent, without at once setting up the standard of Ferdinand and Isabella, and taking possession of the soil in their names. Wherever the Christian goes, his first thought should be to take possession of all hearts in the name of the Lord Jesus.

c Topics for Teachers.

a The Medes came from mountain districts. Reference is to the gathering of warriors under Cyrus, whom God made His agent for the destruction of Babylon.

b Da. v. 1, 30.

c "It is remarkable that the Persians looked on the destruction of idols as part of their national vocation."—*Spk. Com.*

"They who are most weary of life, and yet are most unwilling to die, are such who have lived to no purpose,—who have rather breathed than lived." —*Lord Clarendon.*

break out into unseemly sallies of passion, we cease to have any influence.[d]

4, 5. (4) the noise, *etc.*, the Prophet, seeming to hear the sound of the gathering hosts, calls us to listen to it. "The nations are heard gathering on the high plateau of Iran." kingdoms of nations, Medes, Persians, and Armenians, making up Cyrus's army. the Lord . . battle, Jehovah overruling all these national movements. (5) far country, *see* relation of Media and Persia to Babylon. weapons, *etc.*, the army being simply His instrument.[a] Comp. ch. x. 5.

Ancient ruins.—Ruins of ancient cities a reminder of the truth that "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. cxxvii. 1). Among these ruins are the prominent remains of many temples, the sole material relics of a died-out creed.

> "Majestic fanes of deities unknown,
> Ages have roll'd since here ye stood—alone;
> Since your walls echoed to the sacred choir,
> Or blazed your altars' sacrificial fire.
> And now—the wandering classic pilgrim sees
> The wild bird nestling in the sculptured frieze;
> Each fluted shaft by desert weeds embraced,
> Triglyphs obscured, entablatures defaced:
> See ill-timed verdure clothe each awful pile,
> While Nature lends her melancholy smile.
> And misplaced garniture of flowers that shed
> Their sweets, as if in mockery of the dead."[b]

6—8. (6) howl, as those on whom sudden calamity comes. Howl with distress and fear. day . . hand, your judgment-day. Instead of howling or fearing, Babylon was found feasting in self-security. destruction, or like a sudden stroke.[a] (7) faint, the suddenness of the attack would prevent resistance, and fill all with the spirit of hopelessness. (8) pangs, sudden and terrible pains. amazed . . another, look aghast, in their fright, at each other.[b] flames, in the flush of excitement and alarm.

Note on v. 7.—This figure appears to be taken from the melting of wax, or metals. "My heart, my mind, melts for him: I am dissolved by his love." "Alas! alas! my bowels are melting within me."[c]—*Note on v.* 8.—Great pains are often spoken of as the anguish of parturition. "Ah! my lord, I am very ill: my pains are like those of a woman when bringing forth her first-born." "Has it come to this? am I to bring forth like a woman?" "He cries like the woman in her agony." "Yes, my friend; as the pains of a female in child-bearing are produced by sin, so your present sufferings are produced by the sins of a former birth."[d]

9—11. (9) cruel, or a cruel day it will be: unrelentingly severe. (10) stars, lit. *their Orions.*[a] The Babylonians were astrologers. sun, *etc.*, striking fig. of uttermost distress.[b] (11) the world, in this its grandest, proudest city. terrible, tyrants or oppressors.

Dens of wild beasts.—"There are many dens of wild beasts in various parts. There are quantities of porcupine quills (*kephud*). And while the lower excavations are often pools of water, in

d Seed.

a "Great princes and armies are but tools in God's hand. weapons that He is pleased to make use of in doing His work, and it is His wrath that arms them, and gives them success."—*M. Henry.*

"Once more we look, and all is still as night—all desolate! Groves, temples, palaces, swept from the sight; and nothing visible, ... save here and there an empty tomb, a fragment like a limb of some dismembered giant."

b *Rogers.*

a The Heb. form used is striking. *Shodmish*—*Shaddy.*

b Da. v. 6.

"He lives long who lives well; and time misspent is not lived, but lost. Besides, God is better than His promises, if He takes from him a long lease, and gives a freehold of a better value."—*Fuller.*

c *Roberts.*

d *Idem.*

a "Heb. *Kesilim.* Kesil, the self-confident, is the title given to the constellation Orion."—*Spk. Com.*

b "A fine specimen of the figurative manner in

most of the cavities are numbers of bats and owls. These souterrains (caverns), over which the chambers of majesty may have been spread, are now the refuge of jackals and other savage animals. The mouths of their entrances are strewed with the bones of sheep and goats; and the loathsome smell that issues from most of them is sufficient warning not to procced into the den" (Buckingham). The king of the forest now ranges over the site of that Babylon which Nebuchadnezzar built for his own glory. And the temple of Belus, the greatest work of man, is now like unto a natural den of lions. "Two or three majestic lions" were seen upon its heights, by Sir Robert Ker Porter, as he was approaching it; and "the broad prints of their feet were left plain in the clayey soil." Major Keppel saw there a similar foot-print of a lion. It is also the unmolested retreat of jackals, hyenas, and other noxious animals. Wild beasts are "numerous" at the Mujelibé, as well as on Birs Nimrood. "The mound was full of large holes; we entered some of them, and found them strewed with carcases and skeletons of animals recently killed. The ordure of wild beasts was so strong, that prudence got the better of curiosity, for we had no doubt as to the savage nature of the inhabitants. Our guides, indeed, told us that all the ruins abounded in lions, and other wild beasts; so literally has the Divine prediction been fulfilled, that wild beasts of the desert should lie there, and their houses be full of doleful creatures; that the wild beasts of the island should cry in their desolate houses" (Keppel).[c]

which the Heb. Prophets depict the horrors of national calamity. The metaphors of light and darkness, to express prosperity and adversity, are common; but when the effect is to be heightened, the writer represents the sources of light as being themselves affected, and their splendour as either increased or completely obscured. See Is. xxiv. 23, xxxiv. 4; Eze. xxxii. 7, 8; Joel ii. 10, iii. 15; Am. viii. 9; Mat. xxiv. 29."—*Henderson.*

c *Keith.*

12, 13. (12) **more precious**, by reason of the scarcity of men. A figure indicating the completeness of the national destruction. **wedge of Ophir**, the finest gold being brought from this district.[a] (13) **shake the heavens**, the figure for mighty revolutions: "a general commotion in the framework of nature."

Pride—its fearful price.—

But the price one pays for pride is mountain-high.
There is a curse beyond the rack of death;
A woe, wherein God hath put out His strength;
A pain past all the mad wretchedness we feel,
When the sacred secret hath flown out of us,
And the heart broken open by deep care;
The curse of a high spirit famishing,
Because all earth but sickens it.[b]

a 1 Chr. xxix. 4. The locality of Ophir is still an open question. Never seek for life where God has not placed it.

b *Bailey.*

"A banner long unused and laid away in a dark chamber grows dusty and moth-eaten, and needs, for its preservation, to be unrolled and shaken out, and borne high in air. So spiritual life decays in the confinement and darkness of the world; and that it may gain new vigour, our thoughts must now and then be unfolded and held high, and shaken in the air of heaven."—*Sunday Teachers' Treasury.*

"Let us see that our knowledge of Christ is not a powerless, barren,

14–16. (14) **as the chased**, or as it is with the chased roe. Not being longer able to rule over and defend her tributaries, and her mingled people, these shall flee out of the province of Babylon, finding their way back to their own countries. (15) **found**, present in the city at the time of the siege, both the proper inhabitants, and the foreigners resident there. The ruin will be general. (16) **children**, *etc.*, the usual fearful scenes enacted by an excited soldiery in a city taken by assault.

Hunting the antelope.—To hunt the antelope is a favourite amusement in the East; but which, from its extraordinary swiftness, is attended with great difficulty. On the first alarm, it flies like an arrow from the bow, and leaves the best-mounted hunter and the fleetest dog far behind. The sportsman is obliged to call in the aid of the falcon, trained to the work, to seize on the

unpractical knowledge. Oh that, in its passage from our understanding to our lips, it might powerfully melt, sweeten, and delight our hearts! Remember, a holy calling never saved any man, without a holy heart. If our tongues only be sanctified, our whole man must be condemned." —*Flavel.*

a Burder.

a At this time the Medes were subject to Assyria.

b Isa. xxii. 3, 6.

"Christianity is Christ; understand Him, breathe His spirit, comprehend His mind. Christianity is a life, a spirit." —*Robertson.*

c Lowth.

animal, and impede its motions, to give the dogs time to overtake it. Dr. Russel thus describes the chase of the antelope: "They permit horsemen, without dogs, if they advance gently, to approach near, and do not seem much to regard a caravan that passes within a little distance; but the moment they take the alarm, they bound away, casting from time to time a look behind: and if they find themselves pursued, they lay their horns backward, almost close on the shoulders, and flee with incredible swiftness. When dogs appear, they instantly take alarm; for which reason the sportsmen endeavour to steal upon the antelope unawares, to get as near as possible before slipping the dogs; and then, pushing on at full speed, they throw off the falcon, which, being taught to strike or fix upon the cheek of the game, retards its course by repeated attacks, till the greyhounds have time to get up."[a]

17, 18. (17) **Medes**, here mentioning distinctly the people who were thus to become Divine executioners.[a] **regard silver**, Xenophon tells us that "disregard of riches" was a characteristic of the Medes. (18) **bows**, "for wh. the Persians were famed."[b] They measured about three cubits in length.

Bows. — Both Herodotus and Xenophon mention that the Persians used large bows; and the latter says particularly, that their bows were three cubits long. They were celebrated for their archers (Jer. xlix. 35). Probably their neighbours and allies, the Medes, dealt much in the same sort of arms. In Psalm xviii. 34, and Job xx. 24, mention is made of a bow of brass. If the Persian bows were of metal, we may easily conceive that with a metalline bow of three cubits' length, and proportionably strong, the soldiers might dash and slay the young men, the weaker and unresisting part of the inhabitants, in the general carnage on taking the city.[c]

19, 20. (19) **glory of kingdoms**, Isa. xiv. 4, xlvii. 5; Je. li. 41. **beauty**, *etc.*, this grand city was their pride and boast. **as . . Gomorrah**, *i.e.* as utterly and hopelessly destroyed. (20) **never be**, and as yet it has never been; and now it is never likely to be. **Arabian**, *etc.*, wh. has also been fulfilled.[a]

Fulfilment of prophecy.—Babylon also furnishes another instance. One hundred and sixty years before its overthrow, Isaiah (xiii. 19, xiv. 22, xxi. 2, xlv. 1, xlvii. 27) delivered his predictions. One hundred years after this, Jeremiah prophesied (l. 1, 11, 27, 30, 36, 38, 57). Isaiah names its conquerors, their leader, and states how it will be entered. Both prophets describe its subsequent condition. Herodotus (bk. i. 114), who lived 250 years after Isaiah, and Xenophon (*Cyrop.* v. ciii. 38), who lived 100 years after Herodotus, furnish minute proof of the accuracy of the fulfilment. Strabo says that in his time "the city was a vast solitude." Lucian (c. 16) affirms that "Babylon will soon be sought for and not found, as is already the case with Nineveh." Pausanias (c. viii. 33) states that nothing was left but the walls; Jerome, that in his time it was a receptacle for beasts; and modern travellers (including Sir R. K. Porter) testify to the universal desolation. "It is little better than a swamp, and I could not help reflecting, says one, how faithfully the various prophecies have been fulfilled" (Angus). "Surrounded by such scenes as the modern traveller describes, and comparing them

a "Travellers remark that the Bedawin Arabs still have a superstitious dread of lodging on the site of Babylon." —*Spk. Com.*

"The region was once most fertile, but owing to the Euphrates being now no longer kept within its former channels, it has become a stagnant marsh, unfit for flocks; and on the wastes of its ruins, bricks and cement, no grass grows." —*Fausset.*

"We are oftentimes in suspense between the choice of different pursuits. We choose one at last doubtingly, and with an uncon-

with the pictures of history and prophecy, one may well exclaim with Brownlee :—

"Where are the cities which of old in mighty grandeur rose
Amid the desert's burning sands, or girt with frozen snows?
Is there no vestige now remains, their wondrous tale to tell,
Of how they blazed like meteor-stars, and how, like them, they fell?
Hark! hark! the voice of prophecy comes o'er the desert wide!
Come down, come down, and in the dust thy virgin beauties hide:
O 'daughter of Chaldæa,' thou no more enthroned shalt be,
For the desert and the wilderness alone shall tell of thee.
Though old Euphrates still rolls in his everlasting stream,
Thy brazen gates and golden halls, as though they ne'er had been;
Where stood thy massy tower-crowned walls, and palaces of pride,
The dragon and the wild beast now therein securely hide;
The 'besom of destruction' o'er thee hath swept its way
In wrath, because thine impious hand on God's Anointed lay."

21, 22. (21) **wild beasts,** wild cats, remarkable for their howl. **doleful creatures,** howlers. **owls,** dwellers in ruins, perhaps here meaning *ostriches:* daughters of screaming. **satyrs,** hairy or shaggy ones: perhaps the baboon.[a] (22) **wild . . islands,** jackals. **desolate houses,** *lit.* widows, *i.e.* widowed palaces. **dragons,** prob. creatures of the serpent class. **time is near,** only a century and a half away. **prolonged,** by any reprieve or delay.

Bathanyeh.—Scrambling through, or rather over, a ruinous gateway, a wide street lay before us, the houses on each side standing, streets and lanes branching off to the right and left. There was something inexpressibly mournful in riding along that silent street, and looking in through half-open doors to one after another of those desolate houses, with the rank grass and weeds in their courts, and the brambles growing in festoons over doorways, and branches of trees shooting through the gaping rents in the old walls. The ring of our horses' feet on the pavement awakened the echoes of the city, and startled many a strange tenant. Owls flapped their wings round the grey towers; daws shrieked as they flew away from the housetops; foxes ran out and in among shattered dwellings, and two jackals rushed from an open door, and scampered off along the street before us.[b]—*Owls in Eastern towns.*—The owl, whose native name is *ānthi*, is one of the most ominous birds of the East. Let him only alight upon the house of a Hindoo, and begin his dismal screech, and all the inmates will be seized with great consternation. Some one will instantly run out and make a noise with his areca nut-cutter, or some other instrument, to affright it away. I shot one of them which had troubled us on the roof night by night. But as he was only wounded in the wing, I took him into the house, with the intention of keeping him. The servants, however, were so uncomfortable, and complained so much at having such a beast in the house, that I was obliged to send him away. From these statements it will be seen what ideas would be attached to the owls dwelling in the houses of Babylon.[c]

quered hankering after the other. We find the scheme wh. we have chosen answer our expectations but indifferently—most worldly projects will. We therefore repent of our choice, and immediately fancy happiness in the path which we have declined, and this heightens our uneasiness. We might at least escape the aggravation of it. It is not improbable that we had been more unhappy, but extremely probable that we had not been less so, had we made a different decision." — *Shenstone.*

a "The *Moco*, or *Macacus Arabicus*, is at present found in Babylonia."—*Tristram.* "Whatever the particular species of animals referred to, the essential idea is that Babylon should one day be inhabited exclusively by animals peculiar to the wilderness, implying that it should become a wilderness itself."—*J. A. Alexander.*

About B.C. 20 the site of Babylon was described by Strabo as a vast desolation.

b Dr. Porter.

An upright farmer, giving a reason for his liberal measure, said, "God has permitted me but one journey through the world; and when I am gone I cannot return to rectify mistakes."

c Roberts.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

1—3. (1) have mercy, in restoring Israel after captivity. yet choose, yet again, "as if by a second act of electing grace." strangers, *etc.*, heathens uniting with the restored Church as proselytes.[a] But the idea prob. is. that they shall become servants to Israel whom Israel had. for a time, served.[b] (2) the people, of Babylon. for servants, Ezr. ii. 65. captives, by moral force; by persuasion to serve the one living God.[c] (3) rest, *etc.*, in the gracious providence wh. brought Israel back to Canaan.

The Christian warfare (*v.* 2).—I. Trace a work of grace on the souls of men. There are four distinct states in which the Christian will successively be found. 1. Of captivity; 2. Of conflict; 3. Of victory; 4. Of dominion. II. Make some observations upon it. 1. This work is stupendous; 2. Effectual; 3. Certain.[d]

Work of Christians.—You are forgiven and accepted. You owe all to Christ. You look forth from your position of safety, and behold a world lying in wickedness. You pity the sinful. as the Lord pitied you. Having been saved, you desire, as if by an instinct, to be a saviour. You begin. You grasp a fallen brother by the best band. a brother's love, and draw him to yourself that you may draw him to the Saviour. For a time you seem to have gained your brother. But after a while, at some unguarded moment. and through some unguarded opening, seven devils enter and dwell again in the partially reformed heart. and the last state of the man seems worse than the first. You are weary; but you must still work. Now is the time for toil: the rest remaineth. Two young men were disporting on the ice of a Scottish lake. One, approaching incautiously a treacherous spot, fell through. His companion came quickly to the rescue. Himself sometimes in the water and sometimes on the ice, he many times grasped the drowning man and drew him considerably above the surface; but each time the weight of the wet and paralysed body prevailed; each time it sunk again. until at last the worker's strength was exhausted. and the victim perished. Had you been there when for the last time that strong willing worker drew with all his might to save a sinking brother. and then lay down exhausted. leaving that brother to sink. you would have seen a workman wearied by his work. His hands were wearied with the greatness of his effort, and his heart was weary because the effort had failed. Such is the work to which Christians are called in the world. and such often, though not always, are the disappointments which they meet. At death the weariness of the worker will wholly cease.[e]

4. proverb, parable. or similitude:[a] a song of triumph and exultation. It partakes partly of the character of a "taunting speech," a glorying in the oppressor's downfall. Babylon is regarded as the common enemy of God and of Israel.[b] golden city, marg. *gold exactress*, demanding tribute, enriched with gold of prostrate nations.[c] ceased, expressive term for the contrast bet. the silence of Bab. ruined, and the turmoil of busy Bab., in her prosperity.

"*The golden city.*"—To represent objects of superior excellence

a "Tacitus, a heathen, attests the fact of numbers of Gentiles having become Jews in his time."—*Fausset.*

See Est. viii. 17; Ac. ii. 9—12.

b "There would be a change of conditions bet. them and their oppressors."—*J. A. Alexander.*

c So *Calvin*, etc.

d *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"As any protuberance or wen in the body is a great deformity and blemish to it. so these professors, who are high swollen, and puffed up with conceit, are but as wens in the body mystical: they are but blisters, which contain nothing in them but ill humours, and bring a great deal of deformity and discredit upon that holy religion which they profess."—*Bp. Hopkins.*

"Christian life consists in faith and charity."—*Luther.*

e *Dr. Arnot.*

a "The passage, *vv.* 4—23, moves in lengthened elegiac measure like a song of lamentation for the dead, and is full of lofty scorn."—*Herder.* "A song of derision about the

and importance, comparisons of the highest order are very properly selected. These are sometimes merely simple, and are designed to convey to the mind some predominant quality; but in other cases they are complex, and the metaphor includes that variety of properties which peculiarly belong to its subject. Many figures are taken from gold, both as to its individual and collective attributes. It is made the emblem of value, purity, and splendour. Thus God is likened to gold: "The Almighty shall be thy defence" (marg., gold), Job xxii. 25. So is the word of God, Psa. xix. 10. The saints and their graces are thus represented, Job xxiii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 7. The vials of God's wrath are golden, because they are pure, and unmixed with partiality and passion, Rev. xv. 7. Whatever is rich, pompous, and alluring, is called golden. So Babylon is called a golden city. This cannot undoubtedly be understood in a literal, but figurative sense; for however great might be the profusion of that metal in the city of Babylon, it could not be sufficient to give rise to such a description of its magnificence, but by an allowed and perhaps common allusion. From the frequent recurrence of this figure, it must have been in very general use amongst the Eastern people; and, since its properties are probably better known than those of most other metals, would readily express the meaning of a writer, and be perfectly intelligible to the understanding of his readers. Pindar styles gold the—

"Richest offspring of the mine:
Gold, like fire, whose flashing rays
From afar conspicuous gleam
Through the night's involving cloud,
First in lustre and esteem,
Decks the treasures of the proud."

But in modern times no instance perhaps occurs wherein this comparison is so universally made as by the Birmans. Whoever has read the travels of Captain Symes in the kingdom of Ava must have had his attention forcibly arrested by this circumstance; for there almost everything peculiarly great is styled golden, and without exception everything belonging to the king is so denominated. The city where he resides, the barge which he uses, are styled golden. The following extract will completely explain this circumstance, and form a pleasing addition to the foregoing observations. "We passed a village," says Captain Symes, "named Shoe-Lee-Rua, or golden boat-village, from its being inhabited by watermen in the service of the king, whose boats, as well as everything else belonging to the sovereign, have always the addition of shoe, or golden, annexed to them. Even his Majesty's person is never mentioned but in conjunction with this precious metal. When a subject means to affirm that the king has heard anything, he says that it has reached the golden ears. He who has obtained admission to the royal presence has been at the golden feet. The perfume of attar of roses, a nobleman observed one day, was an odour grateful to the golden nose. Gold, among the Birmans, is the type of excellence. Although highly valued, however, it is not used for coin in the country. It is employed sometimes in ornaments for the women, and in utensils and earrings for the men; but the greatest quantity is expended in gilding their temples, on which vast sums are continually lavished. The Birmans present the substance to their

representative of the Babylonish world-power cannot be appropriate while one is in its power. When one is out of reach of his arm, then the long pent-up resentment may find expression."—*Väyelsbotch.*

b "The Bab. monarchy bade fair to be an absolute, universal, and perpetual one, and in these pretensions vied with the Almighty."—*Mat. Henry.*

c "Nebuchadnezzar's golden image was his empire personified."—*Spk. Com.*

"They who live to the flesh are living crumbling lives, and are going towards dissolution all the time. It is only they who live the life of faith, by the imagination in holy things, that have before them 'the ages to come.' They are those who live toward happiness, singing more and more, rejoicing more and more, the circles and the waves of their experience running with wider and wider sweep."—*Beecher.*

"Experience teacheth us how few there are that pass through this earthly pilgrimage, but meet with unexpected accidents in their way. Our life is like a lighted candle, wh. wastes with the wind, and is often blown out before it is burned."—*Smith.*

gods, and ascribe its qualities to their king." In Ceylon, part of the dress worn by the king is golden shoes, or slippers.[d]

5, 6. (5) staff, sign of imperial power. rulers, better, *tyrants*,[a] those who claimed universal dominion. (6) continual stroke, *Heb.* "stroke without removing." Oppression ever maintained, and never relieved.[b] anger, violence of strong passion. none hindereth, &c. all friends have been alienated by this continuous violence.

The desolation of Babylon.—From Rauwolf's testimony it appears that in the sixteenth century "there was not a house to be seen. And now the eye wanders over a barren desert, in which the ruins are nearly the only indication that it had ever been inhabited." "It is impossible," adds Major Keppel, "to behold this scene, and not to be reminded how exactly the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah have been fulfilled, even in the appearance Babylon was doomed to present, that she should never be inhabited; that 'the Arabian should not pitch his tent there;' that she should 'become heaps;' that her cities should be a 'desolation, a dry wilderness.'" "Babylon is spurned alike by the heel of the Ottomans, the Israelites, and the sons of Ishmael. It is a tenantless and desolate metropolis."[c] Neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. It was prophesied of Ammon, that it should be a stable for camels, and a couching-place for flocks; and of Philistia, that it should be cottages for shepherds, and a pasture for flocks. But Babylon was to be visited with a far greater desolation, and to become unfit or unsuitable even for such a purpose. And that neither a tent would be pitched there, even by an Arab, nor a fold made by a shepherd, implies the last degree of solitude and desolation. "It is common in these parts for shepherds to make use of ruined edifices to shelter their flocks in" (Mignan). But Babylon is an exception. Instead of taking the bricks from thence, the shepherd might with facility erect a defence from wild beasts, and make a fold for his flock amid the heaps of Babylon; and the Arab, who fearlessly traverses it by day, might pitch his tent by night. But neither the one nor the other could now be persuaded to remain a single night among the ruins. The superstitious dread of evil spirits, far more than the natural terror of the wild beasts, effectually prevents them. Captain Mignan was accompanied by six Arabs, completely armed, but he "could not induce them to remain towards night, from the apprehension of evil spirits. It is impossible to eradicate this idea from the minds of these people, who are very deeply imbued with superstition." And when the sun sank behind the Mujelibé, and the moon would have still lighted his way among the ruins, it was with infinite regret that he obeyed "the summons of his guides." "All the people of the country assert that it is extremely dangerous to approach this mound after nightfall, on account of the multitude of evil spirits by which it is haunted."[d]

7, 8. (7) the whole earth, regarded as put in fear as long as Bab. remained in power; able to sing when Bab. was destroyed. singing, a joyful shout.[a] (8) fir trees,[b] inferior trees of cedar class, representing the smaller kingdoms as compared with mighty Bab.[c] See ch. x. 33, 34. laid down, in the quietness of desolation. feller, hewer down of trees.

d Davy's Ceylon.

a Gesenius.

b Kingdoms won by violence are only maintained in subjection by continuous tyranny.

"As for him who smote the nations in wrath, his stroke shall not be removed; he that ruled the nations in anger is persecuted and cannot hinder it."—*Trans. by Junius.*

c Mignan.

"O gentlemen, the time of life is short; to spend that shortness basely, were too long, if life did ride upon a dial's point, still ending at the arrival of an hour."—*Shakespeare.*

"There appears to exist a greater desire to live long than to live well! Measure by man's desires, he cannot live long enough; measure by his good deeds, and he has not lived long enough; measure by his evil deeds, and he has lived too long."—*Zimmerman.*

d Keith.

a Comp. Isa. xliv. 23, xlix. 13, liv. 1, lv. 12.

b "One of the most characteristic trees of Lower Lebanon,

Note on v. 8.—As we passed through the extensive forest of fir trees situated between Deir-el-Kamr and Ainep, we had already heard, at some distance, the stroke of one solitary axe, resounding from hill to hill. On reaching the spot, we found a peasant whose labour had been so far successful that he had felled his tree and lopped the branches. He was now hewing it in the middle, so as to balance the two halves upon his camel, which stood patiently by him, waiting for his load. In the days of Hiram, king of Tyre, and subsequently under the kings of Babylon, this romantic solitude was not so peaceful: that most poetic image in Isaiah, who makes these very trees vocal, exulting in the downfall of the destroyer of nations, seems now to be almost realised anew: "Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us."[d]

9. hell,[a] the grave, *Hades*. The unseen abode of the departed. **is moved,** with expectancy. Those inhabiting it join in the joy at thy humiliation. **stirreth up,** urges all to unite in the triumph over thee.[b] **chief ones,** lit. *he-goats*, type of leaders, great men, kings and princes.

Hebrew sepulchres.—The sepulchres of the Hebrews, at least those of respectable persons, and those which hereditarily belonged to the principal families, were extensive caves, or vaults, excavated from the native rock by art and manual labour. The roofs of them in general were arched; and some were so spacious as to be supported by colonnades. All round the sides were cells for the reception of the sarcophagi: these were properly ornamented with sculpture, and each was placed in its proper cell. The cave or sepulchre admitted no light, being closed by a great stone, which was rolled to the mouth of the narrow passage or entrance. Many of these receptacles are still extant in Judæa: two in particular are more magnificent than all the rest, and are supposed to be the sepulchres of the kings. One of these is in Jerusalem, and contains twenty-four cells; the other, containing twice that number, is in a place without the city.[c]

10, 11. (10) **art thou,** *etc.*,[a] the language of wondering surprise. "There is uncommon beauty in the brevity of this address." (11) **thy pomp,** *etc.*, this is the continuance of the song, not the exclamation of the "shades" in Hades. Pomp is the expression and display of pride. **viols,** put for the music of grand feasting times. **worm,** symbol of corruption:[b] comp. *v.* 19. Reference may be to the king of Babylon's body not being embalmed.

Proud monuments (*v.* 11).—While some have studied monuments, others have studiously declined them, and some have been so vainly boisterous, that they durst not acknowledge their graves; wherein Alaricus seems most subtle, who had a river turned to hide his bones at the bottom. Even Sylla, that thought himself safe in his urn, could not prevent revenging tongues, and stones thrown at his monument. Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world, that they are not afraid to meet them in the next: who, when they die, make no commotion among the dead, and are not touched with that poetical taunt of Isaiah. Pyramids, arches, obelisks, were but the irregularities of vainglory, and wild enormities of ancient

the Aleppo pine, which is inferior only to the cedar." — *Tristram.*

c For Assyria as a cedar, see Eze. xxxi. 3.

Reference may, however, be to the princes and rulers, who felt secure in their positions when Bab. had fallen.

d Jowett.

a Ger. *Hölle*, fr. *höhle*, hollow. Some think derived from A.-S. *helan*, to cover. *Sheol*, Hebrew, *Hades*, Gk., are repres. by *Hell*, Eng.

b "Some of its tenants, once mighty monarchs, are represented by a bold personification as rising from their seats in astonishment at the descent among them of the humbled king of Babylon." — *Fausset.*

c Burder.

a "Who would have thought it? It is what thou thyself didst not expect it would ever come to when thou wast so hard upon us. Thou that didst rank thyself among the immortal gods, art thou come to take thy fate among us poor mortal men?"— *M. Henry.*

b "His body, once so dearly cared for and couched, has now maggots for a couch, and worms for a covering."— *Nägelsbach.*

magnanimity. But the most magnanimous resolution rests in the Christian religion, which trampleth upon pride, and sits on the neck of ambition, humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters, and be poorly seen in angles of contingency. To subsist in lasting monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names and predicament of chimeras, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their Elysium. But all this is nothing in the metaphysics of true belief. To live, indeed, is to be again ourselves, which being not only a hope but an evidence in noble believers, 'tis all one to lie in St. Innocent's churchyard, as in the sands of Egypt: ready to be anything, in the ecstasy of being ever, and as content with six feet as the moles of Adrianus.[c]

12. **Lucifer**, *radiant one;* the morning-star. Heb. *Heylel*, fr. *halal*, to shine.[a] **cut down**, hewn down. The metaphor is here changed, and the fig. taken from the demolition of the *Asherahs*, or idols erected to *Ashtoreth* (*i.e.* Venus, or the morning star).[b]

Lucifer.—There is no name we know so abused and misapplied as this truly beautiful name. Lucifer, the light-bringer, is the Latin equivalent of the Greek *Phosphoros*, which is used as a title of our blessed Lord in 2 Pet. i. 19, to which corresponds the phrase "bright and morning star" of the Book of Revelation (xxii. 16). Applied to Him the epithet is most expressive, for He is the true Light who enlightens every man who cometh into the world, and who has shed a flood of light upon life and immortality. But, unfortunately, the name has been given, almost appropriated, in the first place, to Satan, the "prince of darkness," who is the enemy and destroyer of light in the souls of men. The misapplication and degradation of a noble name arose, in the first instance, from a mistranslation and misinterpretation of Isa. xiv. 12, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O brilliant one [or bright star], son of the morning!" Our translators have used the word Lucifer here, and expositors—later ones slavishly following the earlier, such as Tertullian—have referred the whole passage, which is a highly poetical and beautiful description of the king of Babylon, to the devil; and so in common speech the evil one, who has no light in him, has been named Lucifer. And now, by as widespread an abuse of the word in these countries, it has been degraded as the designation of the common match. The match is more a lucifer, and bears the name more righteously, than the ruler of the kingdom of darkness: yet how tiny a light-bringer it is! What a come-down one feels to be in such an application of the word! The writer of the article "Lucifer" in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* remarks, "Its application, from Jerome downwards, to Satan in his fall from heaven, arises probably from the fact that the Babylonian empire is in Scripture represented as the type of tyrannical and self-idolising power, and especially connected with the empire of the evil one in the Apocalypse."

13—15. (13) **exalt . . stars**, fig. for supreme and universal dominion. "The Bab. thought the several constellations to be connected with particular nations, over whose destiny they dominated."[a] **mount**, *etc.*, poetical for Zion, as the abode of God's

"Worms, instead of silk, becoming his under and his upper bed." — *Ewald.*

'Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale, vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man."— *Shakespeare.*

[c] *Sir T. Browne.*

[a] "The appellation may have been applied to the king of Babylon, on account of the worship of the celestial bodies by the Chaldæans, and bec. they claimed to be under their special protection." — *Wordsworth.*

"In the fig. language of the Heb. a *star* signifies an illustrious prince or king. Nu. xxiv. 17. Falling from heaven denotes a political overthrow, a removal from high and conspicuous dignity previously occupied."—*Henderson.*

[b] "These idols seem in some cases to have had horns, representing prob. rays of light."—*Spk. Com.*

"When a proud man forbids you his presence, he awkwardly confers a favour upon you." — *Zimmerman.*

[a] *Spk. Com.*

[b] "The starry region round the North Pole, high

nation. sides . . north, Ps. xlviii. 2.[b] (14) like . . high, this was the height of presumption and wickedness.[c] "In the wall-sculptures of the Assyr. palaces, the king has the symbols of deity assigned to him." (15) hell, or Hades. Contrast bet. his pretensions and his fate. sides, in the niches of wh. the dead were laid.

Ruined cities.—The Scriptures, in describing the ruined state into which some celebrated cities were to be reduced, represent them not unfrequently (Jer. xlix. 18), as to be so desolated, that no shepherds with flocks should haunt them; which supposes they were to be found on the remains of others. This is a proper representation of complete destruction. For in the East it is common for shepherds to make use of remaining ruins to shelter their flocks from the heat of the middle of the day, and from the dangers of the night. So Dr. Chandler, after mentioning the exquisite remains of a temple of Apollo, in Asia Minor, which were such as that it was impossible, perhaps, to conceive greater beauty and majesty of ruin, goes on, "At evening a large flock of goats, returning to the fold, their bells tinkling, spread over the heap, climbing to browse on the shrubs and trees growing between the huge stones." Another passage of the same writer shows that they make use of ruins also to guard their flocks from the noon-tide heat. Speaking of Aiasaluck, generally understood to be the ancient Ephesus, and certainly near the site of that old city, and at least its successor, he says, "A herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon; and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. We heard the partridge call in the area of the theatre and of the stadium. The glorious pomp of its heathen worship is no longer remembered; and Christianity, which was there nursed by Apostles, and fostered by general councils, until it increased to fulness of stature, barely lingers on in an existence hardly visible." This description is very gloomy and melancholy: however, the usefulness of these ruins is such, for the habitation of those that tend flocks, that it often prevents a place from being quite desolate, and continues it among inhabited places, though miserably ruinated. Such is the state of Ephesus: it is described by Chandler, as making a very gloomy and melancholy appearance, but as not absolutely without people. "Our horses," says he, "were disposed among the walls and rubbish, with their saddles on; and a mat was spread for us on the ground. We sat here, in the open air, while supper was preparing; when, suddenly, fires began to blaze up among the bushes, and we saw the villagers collected about them in savage groups, or passing to and fro with lighted brands for torches. The flames, with the stars and a pale moon, afforded us a dim prospect of ruin and desolation. A shrill owl, called *cucuvaia*, from its note, with a nighthawk, flitted near us; and a jackal cried mournfully, as if forsaken by his companions on the mountain."[d]

16, 17. (16) narrowly, carefully. People are supposed to view the exposed and disgraced body of the onewhile proud king. consider, like those so surprised that they can hardly believe.[a] (17) opened . . prisoners, better as marg., "Did not let his prisoners loose homewards."

Note on v. 16.—Narrowly to look on and to consider even the view of the Mujelibé, is to see what the palace of Babylon, in which kings, proud as "Lucifer," boasted of exalting themselves above the earth always visible and luminous, is a natural type of the heaven of glory, the special abode of the Most High." — *Birks.*

c Da. iii. 1, 13—15, viii. 8, 9—11.

"The Assyrian monarch was a thorough Eastern despot,... rather adored as a god than feared as a man." — *Layard.*

Proud—"As Lucifer."—*Chaucer.* "As prince in pall."—*Ibid.* "As any great Mogul." —*Somerville.* "As the Turkish Soldan." — *Poetical Calendar.* "As a beauty." — *C. Cibber.* "As the lady of a new-made lord."—*P. Pindar.* "As May." — *Jonson.* "As a peacock." —*Chaucer.* "Proud and pert as a pie."—*Ibid.* "Pert and proud as any popinjay." — *Sir W. Scott.*

The inhabitants of the sides of the Alps, where the goitre prevails, come to regard it with veneration. The repulsive wallet-like excrescences swing from their necks only to increase their pride. Those who are not thus deformed they call, tauntingly, "goose-necked."

d *Burder.*

a Ps. lii. 7.

"Consequences of pride. — It thrust proud Nebuchadnezzar out of men's society, proud Saul out of his kingdom, proud

above the stars of God, has now become, and how, cut down to the ground, it is broken in pieces. "On pacing over the loose stones, and fragments of brickwork which lay scattered through the immense fabric, and surveying the sublimity of the ruins," says Captain Mignan, "I naturally recurred to the time when these walls stood proudly in their original splendour,—when the halls were the scenes of festive magnificence, and when they resounded to the voices of those whom death has long since swept from the earth. This very pile was once the seat of luxury and vice; now abandoned to decay, and exhibiting a melancholy instance of the retribution of heaven. It stands alone:—the solitary habitation of the goatherd marks not the forsaken site."[b]

18—20. (18) **lie in glory,** embalmed, and in a grand tomb. **house,** or mausoleum.[a] (19) **cast out,** unburied. **of thy grave,** from being laid in thy grave. **branch,** or useless sucker, wh. the gardener cuts down, and flings away. **raiment .. slain,** all bloody and foul.[b] **stones .. pit,** *i.e.* those ordinarily slain in battle are covered with stones, but thou art exposed, open to all insult.[c] (20) **slain thy people,** by thine ambitious wars. Comp. Napoleon I. devastating the manhood of France. **seed,** or dynasty of the prostrate king. The entire dynasty was destroyed. The name of the godless race was extinguished.

Note on v. 19.—Rather like the abominable tree, meaning that on which criminals were executed. This, in the Roman law, is denominated *infelix arbor;* and Maimonides tells us that the Jews used to bury it with the criminal who suffered on it, as involved equally with him in the malediction of their law.[d] Several deep excavations have been made in different places into the sides of the Mujelibé; some probably by the wearing of the seasons; but many others have been dug by the rapacity of the Turks, tearing up its bowels in search of hidden treasure,"—as if the palace of Babylon were cast out of its grave. "Several penetrate very far into the body of the structure," till it has become as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword. "And some, it is likely, have never yet been explored, the wild beasts of the desert literally keeping guard over them" (Keppel). "The mound was full of large holes"—thrust through. Near to the Mujelibé, on the supposed site of the hanging gardens which were situated within the walls of the palace, "the ruins are so perforated in consequence of the digging for bricks, that the original design is entirely lost. All that could favour any conjecture of gardens built on terraces are two subterranean passages. There can be no doubt that both passages are of vast extent: they are lined with bricks laid in with bitumen, and covered over with large masses of stone. This is nearly the only place where stone is observable." Arches built upon arches raised the hanging gardens from terrace to terrace, till the highest was on a level with the top of the city walls. Now they are cast out like an abominable branch—and subterranean passages are disclosed—down to the stones of the pit. "As a carcase trodden under feet." The streets of Babylon were parallel, crossed by others at right angles, and abounded with houses three and four stories high; and none can now traverse the site of Babylon, or find any other path, without treading them under foot. The traveller directs his course to the highest mounds; and there are none, whether temples or palaces, that

Adam out of paradise, proud Haman out of court, proud Lucifer out of heaven."—*Henry Smith.*

b Keith.

a Diodorus says that the Egyptians paid far more attention to the dwellings of the dead than of the living.

For the disgrace of not being buried, compare 1 Ki. xiii. 22; 2 Chr. xxi. 20, xxxiv. 24.

b "He, the conqueror, who had waded over fields of human blood, was now a mere mass of gore; and was cast away into the heap, on the field of battle, where the gory garments were awaiting the flames." — *Spk. Com.*

c "This prophecy was minutely fulfilled. On entering the city, the army of Cyrus marched straight to the palace, and meeting the king, who was coming out sword in hand, they slew him, and put all who followed him to the sword; and though Xenophon specially notices the permission given to bury the dead, he takes no notice whatever of the royal corpse." —*Henderson.*

d Burder.

e Keith.

are not trodden on. The Mujelibé "rises in a steep ascent, over which the passengers can only go up by the winding paths worn by frequent visits to the ruined edifice."[e]

21—23. (21) slaughter, or a slaughter-house. This is a Divine charge to the Medes and Persians. not rise, to take their fathers' place. (22) cut off, *etc.*, wholly preventing the restoration of the dynasty. nephew, or grandchild. (23) it, the site of Babylon. bittern, perhaps, *hedgehogs.*[a] The sign that the district should be converted into an uninhabitable marsh. pools of water, by neglect of the canals, and flooding of the Euphrates.[b] sweep it, *i.e.* sweep it away.

The besom of destruction (*v.* 23).—What was He going to sweep? The devoted city of Babylon. The word besom is often used, as a figure, to denote the way in which people are swept from the earth. Thus, when the cholera morbus began to rage, it was said, "Alas! alas! it is sweeping us away as with a besom." "How is the cholera in your village?" "It has come like besoms." When the people made offerings and sacrifices to the demons who were believed to produce the disease, the magician, who was believed to be the devil's agent, sometimes said, "Make such and such offerings, or I will sweep you away with a besom." In the Hindoo calendar, or almanac, where predictions are given respecting certain months of the year, it is often said, "The year is not good, it brings a besom."[c]—*The bittern.*—This bird is somewhat smaller than the heron. Its voice resembles the bellowing of a bull, which has occasioned its being known in some parts of this country by the name of "bull of the bog." "The bittern is, in many respects," says Mr. Mudie, in his work on the feathered tribes of Great Britain, "an interesting bird; but it is a bird of the wilds, almost a bird of desolation, avoiding alike the neighbourhood of man and the progress of man's improvements. It is a bird of recluse habits; so that when any locality is in the course of being won to usefulness, the bittern is the first to depart; and when any one is abandoned, it is the last to return." "The bittern shall dwell there" is the final curse, and implies that the place is to become uninhabited and uninhabitable. It bears not the whistle of the ploughman, or the sound of the mattock; and the tinkle of the sheep-bell, or the lowing of the ox (although the latter bears so much resemblance to its own hollow and dismal voice that it has given foundation to the name), is a signal for it to be gone. The habits and instincts of the bittern give us a clue to the force and propriety of the prophetic denunciation against Babylon, "I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts." Zephaniah employs similar imagery in his prophecy of the overthrow of Nineveh: "The Lord will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. Both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voices shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds." Zeph. ii. 13, 14. The bittern, when wounded, defends itself with great obstinacy, throwing itself on its back and darting its sharp beak with great force at its foe. The plumage is beautifully varied with spots, bars, and dashes of black on a fine reddish-yellow ground. The feathers of the head and neck are long, and are capable of being thrown forward.[d]

a Strabo states that enormous hedgehogs were found in the banks of the Euphrates.

b "Babylon lay low, so that when it was deserted, and no care taken to drain the land, it soon became pools of water, standing noisome puddles, as unhealthful as they were unpleasant."—*M. Henry.*

"Some suppose this evil to have had its origin in the diversion of the waters of the Euphrates by Cyrus." — *J. A. Alexander.*

c Roberts.

d R. P. S.

"There are in the sunbeam three different principles, — the chemical, the luminiferous, and caloric; and each of these has a special function to discharge in relation to the plants of the earth. The chemical principle has a powerful influence in germinating the plant: the luminous rays assist it in secreting from the atmosphere the carbon which it requires in order to its growth, while the heat-rays are required to nurture the seed and form the reproductive elements. Now it is a remarkable circumstance that, according to Hunt, the first of these is most powerful, relatively to the others, in spring; that it decreases in summer, while the second be-

comes more powerful; and that in autumn both are lessened, while the third increases in force, that is, each principle becomes potent at the very time when it is most required."—*McCosh.*

"We are ruined, not by what we really want, but by what we think we do; therefore never go abroad in search of your wants. If they be real wants, they will come home in search of you; for he that buys what he does not want, will soon want what he cannot buy."—*Colton.*

"The fewer our wants, the nearer we resemble the gods."—*Socrates.*

"To men press'd by their wants, all change is ever welcome." — *Ben Jonson.*

a Roberts.

a 2 Chr. xxviii. 18—21.

b 2 Ki. xviii. 8.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"From the simple and infinite combination of all His attributes, when they are considered with the mode of pre-eminence, the perfection of God has its existence. It may fitly be described thus: 'It is the interminable, the entire, and, at the same time, the perfect possession of essence and life' (Mat.

24, 25. (24) surely, *etc.*, the Prophet here suddenly leaves the future of Bab., and returns to the invasion of Sennacherib. purposed, in the great providential plan. (25) break, *etc.*, by a sudden calamity. mountains, the army was destroyed on the hills near Jerus. his yoke, that laid by Assyria on Judah. "From the blow inflicted on Sennacherib Assyria never rallied."

Desolate houses.—Europeans are often astonished, in walking through a town or village, to see so many desolate houses, and frequently come to improper conclusions, from an idea that the place had once a greater number of inhabitants. At half an hour's notice, families may be seen to leave their dwellings, never to enter them more. Hence, in almost every direction, may be seen buildings with roofs half fallen in: with timbers hanging in various positions: shutters and doors flapping in the wind, or walls half levelled to the ground. Various are the reasons for which the superstitious idolater will leave his dwelling: should one of the family die on the fifth day of the new or waning moon, the place must be forsaken for six months; or should the *cobra capella* (serpent) enter the house at the times alluded to, the people must forthwith leave the house. Does an owl alight on the roof for two successive nights, the inmates will take their departure; but if for one only, then, by the performance of certain ceremonies, the evils may be averted. Are evil spirits believed to visit the dwelling? are the children often sick? are the former as well as the present occupiers unfortunate? then will they never rest till they have gained another habitation. Sometimes, however, they call for the *sástre, i.e.* magician, to inquire if he can find out the cause of their troubles; when perhaps he says, the walls are too high, or too much in this or that direction; and then may be seen master, servants, children, carpenters, and masons, all busily employed in making the prescribed alterations. But another reason for the desolation in houses is, that a father sometimes leaves the dwelling to two or three of his sons; and then, when the necessary repairs have to be made, one will not do this, another will not do that, till the whole tumbles to the ground.[a]

26—28. (26) whole earth, regarded as conquered, and put under tribute by Assyr.: all shall be delivered, as Judah will be soon. (27) disannul it, with ref. to Sennac.'s taunts, and Babylon's pride. (28) year .. died, B.C. 727. Ref. is to the new prophecy of woe to Philistia, wh. is given in the succeeding verses.[a] The Philistines were finally subdued by Hezekiah.[b]

Immutability of God's counsels (*v.* 27).—We will consider this subject.—I. In a general view: the Scriptures continually represent God as having ordained everything from before the foundation of the world; His decrees to whatever they relate are unchangeable. II. In reference to the particular points specified in the context. 1. The deliverance of God's people; 2. The destruction of His enemies. Apply:—(1) On what a slender foundation are the hopes of the generality fixed; (2) On what an immovable foundation does the believer stand.[c]

The reasons of God.—An amiable and intelligent child never reasons thus:—"My father's plans are inscrutable to me; and therefore I cannot tell whether the steps he may next take will be for my benefit or for my hurt: since I cannot understand his reasons for occasionally subjecting me to pain and privation, I

cannot be sure whether he may not hereafter, for some reason unintelligible to me, devote me undeservedly to destruction : and therefore I have no ground for trusting to his kindness." Such, I say, are not the thoughts that occur to a well-disposed child : who, notwithstanding his inability to explain to himself, in all cases, the reasons of his being sometimes exposed to pain or inconvenience, feels nevertheless an undoubting and a reasonable confidence that his parents love him and seek his benefit, and understand better than he does how to promote it. Such a child will be ready to say, "My father bids me do so and so : and his will is reason enough for me. Doubtless there are good reasons, though unknown to me, for his command ; and these he may perhaps explain to me hereafter ; but in the meantime it is my duty to obey." And such a child would never presume to pronounce that his father had no reason at all for his command, except that such was his pleasure. This would evidently be to attribute to him caprice. On the contrary, he doubts not that there is good reason both for giving the command, and for withholding the explanation of it. That such is the father's will, would be no good reason, to the father, for giving the command ; though it is a sufficient reason, to the child, for obeying it. For the child, therefore, to insist on it that his father had no reason, except his will, for what he does, because he has not thought fit to make the reason known, would be not dutiful humility, but the height of rash presumption. So also an earthly king, who is not responsible to any of his subjects for the commands he gives, may sometimes see fit to issue commands without stating his reasons ; and it would be insolent rashness for any one to conclude that he had no reasons at all, but acted from mere tyrannical caprice. And we also, if we would imitate the example of dutiful children, or loyal subjects, are bound to trust that our heavenly Father and King has good reasons, even when not revealed to us, for all His dealings with mankind.[d]

29, 30. (29) whole Palestina,[a] lit. *Philistia, all of thee.* The word means the *land of sojourners*, and the Philistines were not natives, but emigrants. is broken, or seems to be broken ; the idea is, that Philistia might take advantage of Sennac.'s attack, and Hezekiah's weakness, so it is warned. serpent, prob. fig. for Uzziah, who put Philistia under tribute. cockatrice, fig. for Hezekiah, as a more overwhelming enemy. his fruit, or descendant, *i.e.* Uzziah's. (30) firstborn, *etc.*, fig. for God's people, at the time under depressions and fear.

Note on v. 29.—In Egypt, and other Oriental countries, a serpent was the common symbol of a powerful monarch ; it was embroidered on the robes of princes, and blazoned on their diadem, to signify their absolute power and invincible might, and that as the wound inflicted by the basilisk is incurable, so the fatal effects of their displeasure were neither to be avoided nor endured. These are the allusions involved in the address of the Prophet to the irreconcilable enemies of his nation.[b]

31, 32. (31) howl, or wail. gate, of Philistia's fortress-towns. The place of concourse, where alarm would find expression. north, the city on side of north is Zion. smoke, of signal-fires, calling hosts together. none . . times, *i.e.* there shall be no stragglers or unwilling ones, when the call is made

v. 48; Ge. xvii. 1; Ex. vi. 3; Ac. xvii. 25; Ja. i. 17). This perfection of God infinitely exceeds the perfection of all the creatures, on a threefold account. For it possesses all things in a mode the most perfect, and does not derive them from another. But the perfection which the creatures possess they derive from God, and it is faintly shadowed forth after its archetype. Some creatures have a larger portion (of this derived perfection) than others; and the more of it they possess, the nearer they are to God and have the greater likeness to Him (Ro. xi. 35, 36; 1 Cor. iv. 7; Ac. xvii. 28, 29; 2 Cor. iii. 18; 2 Pe. i. 4)." —*Arminius.*

d Abp. Whately.

a Josephus calls the country occupied by the Philistines, *Palaistine.*

"Mythology is not religion. It may rather be regarded as the ancient substitute, the poetical counterpart, for dogmatical theology."—*Hare.*

b Paxton.

a Archer Butler, M.A.

An indigent philosopher at the court of Ale-

ander sought relief at the hand of that sovereign, and received an order on his treasurer for any sum he should ask. He immediately demanded ten thousand pounds. The treasurer demurred to the extravagant amount; but Alexander replied, "Let the money be instantly paid. I am delighted with this philosopher's way of thinking: he has done me a singular honour. By the largeness of his request, he shows the high idea he has conceived of my wealth and munificence." God is honoured in like manner.
b Campbell.

to muster for attack on thee. (32) **messengers**, who seek from the Prophet the will of God concerning the expedition. **founded Zion**, so will stand by it in this enterprise.

Strength and mission of the Church (*v.* 32).—All around are the evidences of the existence of the Church: what destiny there may yet be in store for the Church we do not know. I. The strongest, most fundamental title of protection is creation; no one frames an object in order to destroy it. Behold how God has loved the world, but to the Church His honour is pledged, its ultimate perfection is the reward of the sorrows of the Lord. II. How does the Church fulfil the promise that she should be the guide and friend of the poor? She is one vast institute for the benefit of the poor, the truths she teaches just those the poor need.[a]

Note on v. 31.—This may be in allusion to smoke arising from distant conflagrations, caused by an advancing desolating army, the sight of which would greatly alarm the inhabitants of Palestina. I have seen the smoke from mountains, whose grass and bushes were on fire, at the distance of forty or fifty miles. Or it may refer to clouds of sand or dust raised by troops rapidly advancing to attack them. By this means I have observed the advance of travelling parties, long before they reached us, from the cloud of sand raised by the movement of the oxen. Game is also frequently discovered by the same means.[b]

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

1, 2. (1) **Moab**,[a] this country had prob. made common cause with Israel and Syria against Assyria; consequently it incurred the vengeance of Assyria. **because**, better, *surely*. **Ar**, or the city. **laid waste**, *comp.* Je. xlviii. **Kir**, prob. *Kir-chareseth*.[b] Or the word may mean, *a citadel*. (2) **he**, Moab personified. **Bajith**, *etc.*, places where its gods, or idols, were. **Dibon**, or *Dimon*, *v.* 9, now *Dhiban*, where the Moabite stone was found. **Nebo**, where was an image of Chemosh. **Medeba**, S. of Heshbon. **baldness**, the greatest mark of sorrow and mortification.[c]

Idolatry.—1. "Gods many," true God—one. 2. Idolatry not confined to heathens, or worship of wood or stone idols (1 Cor. x. 14; Col. iii. 5; Phil. iii. 9). 3. Whatever, other than God, is enshrined in the heart as the chief object of affection is an idol.

> "We do not bend the adoring knee
> To demon gods 'neath forest tree;
> And when the fair round moon returns,
> No heart in votive rapture burns:
> But wrong desire, and cherish'd sin,
> And selfish care enshrin'd within,
> And angry passions, prompt to wake,—
> These are the idols Christians make.
> The great Lord God enthron'd on high
> He sees the soul's idolatry;
> He claims the first love of our heart,
> Nor takes what is but His in part."[d]

3, 4. (3) **tops**, flat roofs. **weeping**, "running down with tears." (4) **Heshbon**, an Amorite city, twenty miles E. of

a Comp. 1 Sa. xiv. 47; 2 Sa. viii. 2; 2 Ki. i. 1, iii. 4, 5; 2 Chr. xx. 1—30.

b Isa. xvi. 7; 2 Ki. iii. 25.

c Isa. iii. 24, xxii. 12; Am. viii. 10.

"Endless all malice, if our God is nigh; fruitless all pains, if He His help deny; patient I pass these gloomy hours away, and wait the morning of eternal day."—*Lady Jane Grey.*

d Verses for Holy Seasons.

a Fausset.
"I'll give thee misery, for here

Jordan. It had been taken by Moab, after the carrying away of Israel.[a] Elealeh, near Heshbon. Jahaz, E. of Jordan, in Reuben. therefore, *i.e.* bec. of the sudden overthrow of their cities. his life, every man's life.

Misery and happiness.—The misery of human life is made up of large masses, each separated from the other by certain intervals. One year the death of a child; years after, a failure in trade; after another longer or shorter interval, a daughter may have married unhappily;—in all but the singularly unfortunate, the integral parts that compose the sum total of the unhappiness of a man's life are easily counted and distinctly remembered. The happiness of life, on the contrary, is made up of minute fractions; the little soon-forgotten charities of a kiss, a smile, a kind look, a heartfelt compliment in the disguise of playful raillery, and the countless other infinitesimals of pleasurable thought and genial feeling.[b]—*A lesson from misery.*—As some schoolmasters have used that discipline to correct the children of great persons by correcting other children in their names and in their sight, and have by this means so wrought upon good natures that they have amended what was amiss at present, and taken more care for the future,—thus the Jews were by God corrected in the punishment of the Egyptians; for the ten plagues of Egypt were as Moses' ten commandments to Israel. And so it is that other men's harms ought to be our arms: every judgment that falls upon another should be as a catechism to us, by way of instruction.[c]

5—7. (5) unto Zoar, in the remote south. an heifer, or "like an untamed heifer, rushing along with loud, hopeless bellowings."[a] The heifer is type of the Moabite nation. three years, the time of a heifer's maturity. Luhith, a mountain-ascent in Moab. Horonaim,[b] near Zoar. (6) Nimrim, the northern part of the country, which is overrun with the enemy and destroyed. (7) brook, *etc.*, or valley of the Arabians: on the boundary bet. Moab and Arabia Petræa, now the *Wady-el-Arabah*.

The weeping willow.—The *Salix Babylonica*, or the willow of Babylon, or our English weeping willow, is a native of the Levant, the coast of Persia, and other places in the East. The manner of its introduction into England is curious, and the story is as follows:—Pope, the celebrated poet, having received a present of Turkey figs, observed a twig of the basket, in which they were packed, putting out a shoot. This twig he planted in his garden; it soon became a fine tree; and from this stock all our willows have descended. This species of willow is generally planted by a still pool, to which it is a beautiful and appropriate ornament: and when in misty weather, drops of water are seen distilling from the extremities of the branches, nothing can be more descriptive than the title it has obtained of the weeping willow.

8, 9. (8) Eglaim, Eze. xlvii. 10. Beer-elim, *the well of the princes.* (9) waters, *i.e.* the Arnon. more, *i.e.* additions of the blood of the slain. lions, fig. for the Chaldæans.

Despair the desperation of the soul.—

I can grapple
With certain ill, and bid it strike, and shrink not;

she dwells; this is her house, where the sun never dawns; the bird of night sits screaming o'er the roof: grim spectres sweep along the horrid gloom, and nought is heard but wailings and lamentings."—*Rowe.*

b Coleridge.

"There's nothing bright above, below, from flowers that bloom to stars that glow, but in its light my soul can see some feature of the Deity."—*Anon.*

c Spencer.

a Spk. Com.
b The word means *the two poles.*
"The understanding of God is a faculty of His life, which is the first in nature as well as in order, and by which He distinctly understands all things and everything which now have, will have, have had, can have, or might hypothetically have, any kind of being; by which He likewise distinctly understands the order which all and each of them hold among themselves, the connections and the various relations which they have or can have."—*Arminius.*
"Despair is like froward children, who, when you take away one of their playthings, throw the rest into the fire for madness. It

grows angry with itself, turns its own executioner, and revenges its misfortunes on its own head. It refuses to live under disappointments and crosses, and chooses rather not to be at all, than to be without the thing which it hath once imagined necessary to its happiness." —*Charron.*

Woo danger with my sword, and dally with her
Like some pale bride, in battle won and ravish'd;
Making that pastime which is others' toil.
Give peril but a name, and I will seek it
Front join'd to front. But when the laden bosom,
With its own weight oppress'd, sees not its foe,
And struggles with it knows not what,—some phantom
Like that which rides the sleeper in his dreams,
Stifling all utterance, benumbing motion,
And stagnating the life-blood at the heart,—
Then I am but a coward.
Fear, like a warder, sentinels my steps,
And haunts me in a myriad shapes—not one,
Yet all without a shape, and undefined.
I must know further, and the dead must speak it.[a]

[a] *Smedley.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

1, 2. (1) **lamb,** *i.e.* the tribute-lambs. Moab paying her tribute in kind, and being famous for her flocks and herds. **the ruler,** the true ruler, God in Israel, represented by the Israelite king. **Sela,** or Petra. **to the wilderness,** better, *in the wilderness.* Note the situation of Sela. (2) **wandering bird,** "When the robber came to rifle their nest, they flew away. As soon as he retired, they came back, tho' timorously, to their old homes."[a] **daughters,** or inhabitants. **fords of Arnon,** their old neighbourhoods before they fled.

The wandering bird (*v.* 2).—The figure appears to be taken from a young bird being thrown out of the nest before it is able to fly, and which consequently wanders about for a place of refuge. "Well, Tamban, what has become of your profligate son?" "I know not, my friend, because I have turned him out of the nest." "Why, my boy, have you come to this distant country?" "Because my relations turned me out of the nest." "Alas for me! alas for me!" says the bereaved mother; "my young one has taken to the wing; it has flown from the nest." "I have only one left in the nest; shall I not take care of it?" "I should like to get into that nest;" says the young man who wishes to marry into a high and rich family. "Ah! my lord, dismiss me not from your service: to whom shall I go for employment? I have many children, who will be sufferers if I leave you: who will throw a stone at the nestlings? who will put fire to the lair of the young cubs of the jungle? Ah! my lord, turn me not away; I shall be like a bird wandering from its nest."[b]

[a] *Spk. Com.*

"Though numberless drops be in the sea, yet, if one be taken out of it, it hath so much the less, though insensibly; but God, because He is infinite, can admit of no diminution. Therefore are men niggardly, because, the more they give, the less they have; but Thou, Lord, mayst give what Thou wilt without abatement of Thy store. Good prayers never come weeping home: I am sure I shall receive either what I ask or what I should ask."—*Bp. Hall.*

[b] *Roberts.*

3, 4. (3) **take counsel,** receive this warning, prepare to act wisely in this emergency. **make . . shadow,** *i.e.* give shelter to those of Israel who were fleeing before Sennacherib. Many of the villagers would flee in the direction of Moab. Give asylum to the fugitives. (4) **mine outcasts,** ch. xi. 12. **extortioner,** Assyria's power will soon be broken. The burden of sheltering the fugitives will not lie on you long.

Shadowed at noonday (*v.* 3).—Note the historic meaning of text—Moab succouring persecuted Israel. Parabolic interpretation: noonday heat a common Oriental figure for distress, and shadow a relief from it. An Old Testament parallelism of the

God presides over all things and over all men. He shapes our courses. He loves the world, and bears it in His arms as a mother carries her child in her bosom. He watches over it. He smiles at the fantasies of tyranny, and

precept, "Bear ye one another's burdens." I. Noondays of suffering.—physical, mental, spiritual. II. The shadow spoken of,—sympathy, etc. III. Make thy shadow as the night, no half-measures; "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," etc.[a]

Promised relief.—During the long and terrible siege of Lucknow, the garrison resolved never to surrender; and the women and children under their protection determined never to fall alive into the hands of the bloody Sepoys. They sent a messenger through the enemy's lines to Sir Henry Havelock, who was approaching for their deliverance. He returned the reply, "Hold out: I am coming, and will be with you soon." With a small force he had to fight his way, and even to await re-enforcements; but the devoted Havelock kept his promise. At length the sound of his guns was heard, and he was soon hailed as the deliverer. Besieged soul, your resistless Lord sends you a similar answer. Hold out: He is coming to your relief.

[a] W. L. in. *Analyst.*

"Self-trust is the essence of heroism."—*Emerson.*

5. the throne, *etc.*, or there shall be a throne, etc.; referring to the throne of Hezekiah, who would grant Moab a full reward for all her fidelity and kindness.[a]

Infinitude of mercy.—

Say not that any crime of man
Was e'er too great to be forgiven:
Can we within our little span,
Engrasp the viewless mind of heav'n?
Shall we attempt with puny force
To lash back ocean with a rod?
Arrest the planets in their course?
Or weigh the mercies of a God?
Say not that any crime of man, etc.

Our mercies, like ourselves, may be
Small, finite, and ungracious ever;
May spurn a brother's bended knee,—
But God forsakes the contrite, never!
Vast as Himself they shine above;
To eyes that look through sorrow's tear;
Great though the crime, great is the love,
If those who seek it are sincere.
Say not that any crime of man, etc.[b]

[a] "He foresees and foretells the destruction of the Assyrian power under Sennac., and the prosperous times of Hezekiah, to whom, after that great deliverance, many brought gifts (2 Chr. xxxii. 22, 23). Doubtless Moab was among the number, and was received into the protection of Judah."—*Wordsworth.*

"Mercy turns her back on the unmerciful."—*Quarles.*

[b] *Dr. Mackay.*

6, 7. (6) **pride of Moab,** Je. xlviii. 29.[a] "This *v.* contains the ground of the refusal wh. the Moabites should meet with from the Jews." **lies . . so,** *i.e.* not according to fact. His pretensions are untrue; his boastings are false.[b] (7) **therefore,** on account of the refusal of the Jews to give an asylum to the Moabites. **howl for Moab,** *i.e.* the cry of lament from one locality meets that of the next.[c] **the foundations,**[d] these being exposed, intimate the ruin of the town. **Kir-hareseth,** one of the principal fortresses (ch. xv. 1; 2 Ki. iii. 25). **mourn,** better. *moan.* **stricken,** crushed and spirit-broken.

Moab (*vv.* 6—11).—I. The sins of Moab—pride, wrath, falsehood. II. The sorrows of Moab—destruction of its cities, desolation of the land. III. Pity for Moab—human, Divine.[e]

Uses of pride.—In general pursuits, pride will often supply a stimulus to exertion. But there is much in its usual influence from which evil must result rather than good. It ever produces a dislike of obligation which, in reference to the discovery of

[a] Is. xiii. 11, xxv. 9—12.

"With the use of the adopted French word *hauteur*, the verse may be imitated thus: 'We have heard of the *haughtiness* of Moab (he is very *haughty*); his *high-mindedness*, and his *hauteur*, and his *insolence*.'"—*Henderson.*

[b] "His boastful, lying, treacher-

mocks the heirs of oppressors. He knows in His heart that the day is coming when every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall make him afraid.

truth, must ever be exceedingly detrimental. To be proudly negligent of the labour of others is, in such cases, to be busied with the alphabet of things when we might be acquiring a mastery of their language. The man, moreover, who has formed an extravagant estimate of his own capability will probably underrate the effort necessary to success; and instead of profiting by the reproofs which his failures may call forth, will generally become indignant, warped in the future exercise of his judgment, and wedded to his mistakes, however preposterous. The history of every people is pregnant with the ill effects of systems and enterprises which have owed their origin chiefly to this passion—either in its palmy state, when swollen by conceptions of superior power, or in its state of resentment, when wounded by opposition. In all matters of opinion it has been the parent of innumerable errors, and in social life it has produced all possible disorder and suffering. Whatever presumption has done, it has done as the firstborn of pride: and whatever tyranny has done, it has done as the favoured offspring of the same parent. Viewed in its influence on Christianity, it must be apparent that the tendency of pride will be to give plausibleness and efficiency to everything that may favour those elated conceptions, as to the present condition of human nature, which persons of this character are ever disposed to entertain. When a man of this class is also a man of some benevolence, the flattering judgment which he has formed of himself may be the effect, in part, of a similar misconception with regard to the intellectual or the moral power of the mind in general: and his persuasion will perhaps be, that his plea is not urged so much in his own behalf as in behalf of the species.*f*

8. fields . . languish, additional reason for lamentation. Not the towns only but the wheat-fields and vineyards are destroyed. Heshbon was the western part of the high table land E. of the Jordan.*a* **Sibmah,** half a Roman mile from Heshbon town, and famous for its grapes. **lords . . heathen,** or *the nations;* a title claimed by the kings of Assyria.*b* **broken down,** so as to destroy them: intimating the havoc made by the Babylonians. **Jazer***c* **. . sea,***d* a poetical description of the luxuriant growth and wide propagation of the vine.

Homiletic hints.—I. Righteousness exalteth a nation. Happy is the people whose God is the Lord. II. Be thankful to Him by whom kings reign, for the civil and religious liberty of this land. III. Pray for the continued prosperity of Britain. IV. Seek to increase the moral power of the nation by our individual piety. V. Fenced cities fail as places of refuge: the Lord is a strong tower, into which the righteous run and are safe. VI. Have you made Him your refuge?

Moral and religious suggestions.—1. State of these countries ill, what populous and fertile districts may become when the blessing of God is withheld. 2. Brute force and fenced cities unable to cope with Divine wrath. Who shall be able to stand in the great day of His wrath? 3. Gilead, that once produced a precious balm, and supplied Israel with stores, now a sterile waste, yet with capabilities; ill. the possible degeneracy of countries and individuals. 4. Present state of Moab confirms the veracity of Scripture. 5. Ill. the advantages of good government. "Those who might cultivate the soil neglect the advantages of husbandry

ous, random talk has no reality in it. —*Wordsworth.*

c "Or, the survivors for those who are lost."—*Syk. Com.*

d "Ruins."—*Gesenius.*

e Dr. Lyth.

"Pride lives with all; strange names our rustics give to helpless infants, that their own may live; pleased to be known, they'll some attention claim, and find some by-way to the house of fame."—*G. Crabbe.*

f Vaughan.

a "The traveller Legh brought so-called Heshbon wheat to England having 84 grains in the ear, wh. weighed four times as much as an English ear of wheat."—*Nägelsbach.*

b On the inscription at Khorsabad, Sargon says: "The gods Assur, Nebo, and Merodach, have given me the *lordship* of the nations."

c The ancient capital of the Ammonites, 15 miles from Heshbon.

d Prob. only the *Dead Sea* is meant here.

Ps. lxxx. 8–11.

in parts where the soil is good, saying, as a poor Arab did to Dr. Porter, 'The poorer it looks, the less will our enemies covet it.'" [e]

9—11. (9) **weeping of Jazer,**[a] *i.e.* weeping as genuine as Jazer's own. **Elealeh,** Nu. xxxii. 3, 37. In later times occupied by Moab. **shouting . . fallen,** *i.e.* on thy fruits, etc., a shouting is fallen, the shouting of those who trample down thy vines.[b] The word means a *war-cry.* (10) **gladness,** *etc.*, comp. Je. xlviii. 33. **treaders,**[c] these give place to the tramplers. (11) **bowels,** used in Heb. as we use *breast, bosom.* In Sc. the seat of yearning compassion. **like an harp,** vibrating at the touch of the plectrum. The harp best expresses the wailings of grief.

The failure of harvest (*vv.* 9, 10).—I. What does it cost? II. How easily can God destroy it? III. How soon will it terminate? IV. Is it worth the price which men set upon it?

Harvest scene.—

Now o'er his corn the sturdy farmer looks,
And swells with satisfaction to behold
The plenteous harvest which repays his toil.
We too are gratified, and feel a joy
Inferior but to his, partakers all
Of the rich bounty Providence has strewed
In plentiful profusion o'er the field.
Tell me, ye fair Alcanor, tell me, what
Is to the eye more cheerful, to the heart
More satisfactive, than to look abroad,
And from the window see the reaper strip,
Look round, and put his sickle to the wheat?
Or hear the early mower wet his scythe,
And see where he has cut his sounding way,
E'en to the utmost edge of the brown field
Of oats and barley? What delights us more
Than studiously to trace the vast effects
Of unabated labour? To observe
How soon the golden field abounds with sheaves?
How soon the oat and bearded barley fall
In frequent lines, before the keen-edged scythe?
The clatt'ring team then comes, the swarthy hind
Down leaps, and doffs his frock alert, and plies
The shining fork. Down to the stubble's edge
The easy wain descends half built, then turns,
And labours up again. From pile to pile
With rustling step the swain proceeds, and still
Bears to the groaning load the well-poised sheaf.[e]

12—14. (12) **weary,** with the burden of his calamities. **his sanctuary,** that of Chemosh, the god of Moab. **not prevail,** not gain any relief by thus praying to a false god.[a] (13) **since that time,** the time "when Moab's pride and resistance to God were first heard of."[b] The previous prophecies had been general, now the Prophet fixes a time for the Divine judgments. (14) **as . . hireling,** who will take care to execute his commission within the allotted time.[c] **contemned,** or brought into contempt.

The vanity of human glory (*v.* 12).—I. What does it cost! II. How easily can God destroy it! III. How soon will it terminate! IV. Is it worth the price which men set upon it?

e Topics.

a "It is not unlikely that the people's means of subsistence were chiefly derived from their vineyards."—*Henderson.*

b "The battle shout instead of the usual harvest song."—*Fausset.*

c In *Wilkinson's Anc. Egyp.* are repres. of persons treading out the grapes. Some six or seven, holding by as many ropes suspended from a common hook in the ceiling, stamp in the press or upper trough, and thus press out the juice, wh. flows into the trough below.

Je. xiii. 17; Lu. xix. 41.

d Dr. Lyth.

"The city reveals the moral ends of being, and sets the awful problem of life. The country soothes us, refreshes us, lifts us up with religious suggestion."—*Chapin.*

e Hurdis.

a "The term expresses the fruitless fatigue and trouble to wh. idolaters must submit in worshipping a deity from which no aid can be obtained."—*Henderson.*

Je. xlviii. 13.

b Spk. Com.

c No specific historical account of the destruction of Moab is given, but we know that when they marched into Canaan the Assyrians usually ravaged the trans-Jordanic districts (see 1 Chr. v. 26).

The Moabite inscription.—The famous Moabitic inscription lately discovered by M. Clermont-Ganneau has now been published by him. In many parts it is unfortunately still imperfect, but we may hope that these deficiencies may be supplied hereafter by the recovery of the missing fragments. Already, however, it is possible to state what facts of historical interest are contained in this very early monument of Phœnician sculpture. I have not thought it necessary to give the reasons why my interpretation differs in some respects from that of M. Clermont-Ganneau: such a description must be reserved for the pages of a journal specially devoted to philology. The stone containing the inscription in question was a monumental altar erected by Mesa, king of Moab, at Karhah, after his revolt on the death of Ahab, to signalise his victories over Israel. Until his days, says he, Chemosh was irritated against the land of Moab and oppressed it, but then became more favourable, and so Israel began to perish. Then a number of successes follow—his general, Omri, takes Medeba, erects several buildings in it, amongst them a temple (?) of Chemosh. Mesa himself builds Baal-Meon and Kirjathaim, fights against Israel at Jaazer (?), retires towards the land of Moab, and performs his devotions (?) to Chemosh at Kerioth, remaining with his men till the next day. Then by order of Chemosh he besieges Nebo (a great lacuna), Jahaz, and at last takes Dibon. Next he declares himself to have built Karhah, the walls of ha-Yearim and . . . with its gates and towers; he orders the people to dig cisterns in the interior of Karhah, and compels the Israelite captives (?) to surround it with a trench. Mesa also mentions the construction of a fortress or ford at the Arnon, the building of Beth-Bamoth, Bezer, of the fortifications of Dibhon, and other towns which he added to his land: he built also . . . Beth-Diblathaim and Beth-Baal-Meon, to which last he transferred some Moabites (?). Finally, at the command of Chemosh he fought against Horonaim (a great lacuna). All these towns, the conquest of which is here related, were acquired by Mesa after the death of Ahab, during the two years of his successor Ahaziah and the first year of Jehoram: at the end of these three years, as mentioned in Isa. xvi. 14, "the glory of Moab was contemned" by the expedition of the three kings, related in 2 Kings iii., in which all the newly-made conquests were lost.[e]

d *Dr. Lyth.*

"Though the angels and saints have different degrees of glory, yet every one is perfectly happy and pleased. As the strings of an instrument differ in the size and sound; some are sharp and high, some grave and deep, others, a mean, so that if every string had judgment and election, it would choose to be what it is: so from the different degrees of glory in heaven, the most amiable and equal order appears that satisfies every one."
—*Dr. Bates.*

e *Ad. Neubauer (Daily News).*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

1—3. (1) **Damascus**, the metropolis of Syria.[a] Now one of the most opulent cities of the East, with a population of over 100,000.[b] **taken away**, from the list of inhabited cities. **ruinous heap**, *comp.* figs. Mi. iii. 12. On one of the Assyr. inscrip. Tiglath says, "Cities of the Damascus land I desolated *like a heap of rubbish.*" (2) **cities of Aroer**, there were two of this name in the trans-Jordanic district. **none . . afraid**, bec. the country should be desolated even of ordinary enemies to flocks. (3) **fortress**, or defence-city. **kingdom**, or royalty. **remnant**, left from former inroads. **glory . . Israel**, wh. should be humbled in captivity.

a Ge. xiv. 15, xv. 2.

"No Eastern city has been so often overthrown and rebuilt as Damascus."—*Vitringa.*

Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, was the agent in the fulfilment of this prophecy B.C. 740 (2 Ki. xvi. 9).

Damascus (sketch of history).—According to Josephus (*J. Ant.*

i. 6), Damascus was founded by Uz, son of Aram, grandson of Shem. First named in Scripture (Ge. xiv. 15) in connection with Abraham, whose steward, Eliezer, was a Damascene (xv. 2). Tradition asserts that Abram, on his way to Canaan, stayed some time at Damascus. If Haran was in the neighbourhood (according to Dr. Beke) this may have been so. Damascus reduced to subjection by David (2 Sam. viii. 5, 6; 1 Ch. xviii. 5, 6), who probably allowed a native prince, said to be Hadad (*J. Ant.* vii. 5, 2), to retain the throne. In time of Solomon, one Rezon took Damascus (1 Ki. xi. 23—25). Afterwards Ben-Hadad occupied the district (1 Ki. xx. 34), and his son, the foe of Ahab (xx., xxii.; 2 Ki. vi., vii.). To him succeeded Hazael (viii. 15), and then his son Ben-Hadad (xiii. 3, 24), in whose reign it may have been that Damascus was subjected by Jeroboam II., king of Israel (xiv. 28). We hear no more of Damascus till time of Ahaz, who, having asked aid of Tiglath-Pileser, the Assyrian came, killed Rezon, and occupied Damascus, where he was met by Ahaz (xvi. 5—10). This predicted (Is. xvii.; Am. i. 3—5). Further troubles foretold (Jer. xlix. 27—32): fulfilled, according to Josephus (*J. Ant.* x. 9, 7), by invasion of Chaldæans. It afterwards passed into hands of Persians (*Strabo.* xvi. 2, 19), and for its strength was chosen by Darius as a store for his treasures. It afterwards became a possession of the Greeks, and from them passed under the Romans (*J. Ant.* xiv. 2, 3). In New Testament times it was the scene of St. Paul's conversion (Acts ix.), part of kingdom of Aretas, an Arabian (2 Cor. xi. 32); later it was reckoned to Decapolis. It grew in splendour under the Greeks, and when taken by Mohammedans, in A.D. 634, was one of chief cities of East. Taken by Turks 1006, and by Tamerlane 1400. It is still a great city under the Turks. Population 140,000, of whom 12,000 Christians, and as many Jews. In consequence of a dispute between the Druses and Maronites, the Mohammedans massacred above 3,000 Christians. Many were rescued by Abd-el-Kader. Fuad Pasha executed 160 for these outrages, and by conscription made 11,000 of the inhabitants soldiers.[c]

b Damascus is almost the only one of all the cities of Biblical antiquity that flourishes still down to the present day."—*Nägelsbach.*

In the midst of this plain lies at your feet the vast lake or island of deep verdure, walnuts and apricots waving above, corn and grass below; and in the midst of this mass of foliage rises, striking out its white arms of streets hither and thither, and its white minarets above the trees which bosom them, the city of Damascus.

"Glories, like glowworms, afar off shine bright, but look'd too near, have neither heat nor light."—*Webster.*

4, 5. (4) **made thin,** reduced to almost nothing. **fatness .. lean,** fig. taken fr. the growing leanness of a fat man in famine-time.[a] (5) **gathereth the corn,** these fig. imply the clean sweeping away of the people from the land. **with his arm,** grasping them while he cuts off the ears. In the E. the straw is left in the field. **gathereth ears,** perhaps gleaneth. Even collecting the stray ears. **Rephaim,**[b] a fruitful plain S.W. of Jerusalem, sloping towards Bethlehem.

c Topics.

a "Or the fig. is that of a man in a consumption, that is become a mere skeleton, and reduced to skin and bones."—*Gill.*

b The name is due to the belief that it was originally occupied by a section of the race of Canaanitish giants, Jos. xv. 8.

Homiletic hints.—I. Divine calls not to be surrendered for earthly advantages (Abram, if he visited, did not settle in Damascus). II. The Divine fountain better than the earth's best source of cleansing; inasmuch as it cleanses the heart. III. Man's extremity God's opportunity. The time of the fugitive disciples' great perplexity was the hour of Saul's conversion. IV. God saves useful lives: Paul's escape. V. A more beautiful city than Damascus awaits the Christian; in which he shall find peace, joy, and eternal security.

Moral and religious suggestions.—1. Association of Abram with ancient history of Damascus may illustrate the rescue from oblivion of interesting spots by incidents and casual allusions of sacred writings. 2. Eliezer served Abraham. The world servant

Proverbs:—"You will never make a crab walk straight forwards."—*Greek.* "The wolf changes his coat, but not his dis-

position."—*Latin.* "What is sucked in with the mother's milk runs out in the shroud."—*Spanish.* "Drive away nature, and back it comes at a gallop."—*French.* "The sin of an ass brays twice a day."—*Spanish.* "What's bred in the bone will never be out of the flesh."—*English.*

[c] *Spk. Com.*

[b] A remnant of Israel shall return.

[c] "The gleanings here are the ignoble refuse who survived the deportation of the ten tribes by Assyria, not the pious remnant."—*J. A. Alexander.*

[d] *Dr. J. Burns.*

"Solitary shores beside lone oceans, where no soul can come but harmonies of windsand swooning waves, or clamour of imprisoned waters, deep in rocky chasms."—*Ollier.*

"From low to high doth dissolution climb, and sinks from high to low along the scale of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail. A musical but melancholy chime, which they can hear who meddle not with crime, nor avarice, nor overanxious care."—*Wordsworth.*

of the Church (many irreligious men aided Noah in building the ark). 3. Eliezer of Damascus a faithful servant. Upright men among the heathen. How much of his goodness may be traced to his connection with the patriarch? 4. Most beautiful spots of earth have often been the scenes of greatest crimes and disasters. 5. No earthly paradise should cause us to forget the better land. "Here we have no continuing city." 6. The famous Damascus most celebrated as the scene of a memorable conversion. St. Paul's spiritual birthplace; next to Bethlehem. the most important and influential place of nativity in the world. In the one the great Master, a faithful servant was born. 7. Contrast between Eliezer and Paul. The Gentile servant negotiated a marriage for the patriarch's (Abraham = high father) son. Paul, another Gentile servant of the great Father—our Father which art in heaven—went out to betroth Jesus to the Gentiles. 8. Beautiful places not always safe for good men. Paul by night fled from Damascus, and by night also Lot fled from Sodom. 9. The story of Naaman a comment on the world's incompetence to supply spiritual needs; and formal ablutions to cleanse away moral pollution.

6—8. (6) gleaning grapes, *i.e.* a few inhabitants. shaking . . tree, "the first gathering of olives is by the hand, then the branches are shaken or beaten; but there is still a gleaning left,"[a] De. xxiv. 20. Some think the reference is to the pious Jews;[b] others, more prob., refer it to the scattered few left in the land.[c] (7) look to, under the pressure of exceeding calamity they would turn to Jehovah. Holy One, *see* Is. i. 4. (8) altars, associated with his former idolatrous confidences. groves, Asherahs, symbolical fig. of trees, images, lit. *sun images.*

The diminutions and changes of life (*vv.* 6, 7).—I. The various illustrations of the text. 1. It is exhibited in the adverse changes of life; 2. In the failure of bodily health and vigour; 3. In the bereavements of kindred and friends; 4. In the powers and capacities for useful activity; 5. It will apply to time and seasons of probation. II. The uses we should make of the subject. 1. It should impress us with the value of earthly things; 2. The folly of earthly-mindedness; 3. The necessity of wisely using well our opportunities: 4. Seeking a fitness for the world of the future; 5. Believing and devotional confidence in God. Apply:—(1) See the folly of thoughtless levity; (2) The necessity of Divine wisdom; (3) Pious arrangements with regard to the disposal of our time, etc.: (4) Christ is ever the same.[d]

Gleaning grapes.—The vintager cuts down the grapes from the vine with a sharp hook or sickle: but the olive was sometimes beaten off the tree, and sometimes shaken. The former method is mentioned by Moses, in one of his precepts: "When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow." The latter is marked by the Prophet Isaiah: "Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree; two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord God of Israel." It occurs again in a denunciation of Divine judgments by the same Prophet: "When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking

of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes, when the vintage is done." The conjecture of Harmer, on these quotations, in which the shaking of the olive tree is connected with the gleaning of grapes, is not improbable, "that the shaking of the olive tree does not indicate an improvement made in after times on the original mode of gathering them; or different methods of procedure by different people, in the same age and country, who possessed olive yards; but rather expressed the difference between the gathering of the main crop by the owners, and the way in which the poor collected the few olive berries that were left, and which, by the law of Moses, they were permitted to take." The custom of beating the olive with long poles, to make the fruit fall, is still followed in some parts of Italy. This foolish method, besides hurting the plant, and spoiling many branches that would bear the year following, makes the ripe and unripe fruit fall indiscriminately, and bruises a great deal of both kinds, by which they become rancid in the heaps, and give an ill-flavoured oil. Such is the statement of the Abbot Fortis, in his account of Dalmatia; we are not then to wonder that in the time of Moses, when the art of cultivation was in so simple and unimproved a state, beating should have been the common way of gathering olives by the owners, who were disposed to leave, we may suppose, as few as possible, and were forbidden by their law to go over the branches a second time. But shaking them appears to have been sufficient, when they had hung till they were fully ripe; and was therefore practised by the poor, or by strangers, who were either not provided with such long poles as the owners possessed, or did not find them necessary. Indeed, it is not improbable that the owners were well aware of the injury done to the olive trees by beating, although they practised it, because it was the most effectual way of gathering the fruit with which they were acquainted; and might therefore prohibit the poor and the stranger to collect the gleanings in that manner: they were on that account reduced to the necessity of shaking the olive berries from the tree, how ineffectual soever might be the method, or remain without them. The main crop, then, seems to have been taken from the olive by beating, and the gleanings uniformly by shaking. Under this conviction, Dr. Lowth has, with great judgment, translated the sixth verse of the seventeenth chapter of Isaiah: "A gleaning shall be left in it, as in the shaking of the olive tree."[e]

9—11. (9) **forsaken bough**, from which fruit and leaf are stripped. **they left**, the persons referred to are not precisely indicated. Prob. the reference is to the Canaanites who were guilty of the same sins, and had been stripped off the land by Israel. (10) **rock**, familiar Sc. term for God.[a] **plant**, *etc.*, with reference to the importation of foreign idols, and idolatrous systems, fr. Syria and Phœnicia. (11) **make . . grow**, fence it, and tend it. **harvest . . sorrow**, very different fr. their expectations.

Searching after God.—

I sought Thee round about, O Thou, my God,
In Thine abode.
I said unto the earth, "Speake! art thou He?"
She answer'd me,

"Life is the jailer of the soul in this filthy prison, and its only delivery is death. What we call life is a journey to death; and what we call death is a passport to life. True wisdom thanks Death for what he takes, and, still more, for what he brings. Let us then, like sentinels, be ready because we are uncertain, and calm because we are prepared. There is nothing formidable about death but the consequences of it; and these we ourselves can regulate and control. The shortest life is long enough if it lead to a better; and the longest life is too short if it do not."—*Colton.*

"Not rural sights alone, but rural sounds, exhilarate the spirit and restore the tone of languid nature."—*Cowper.*

e Paxton.

a De. xxxii. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31; Is. xxvi. 4; 1 Co. x. 4.

"An Indian's conceptions of God. Who is it that causes the rain to rise in the high mountains, and to empty itself into the ocean? Who is it that causes to blow the loud winds of winter, and that calms them again in the

summer? Who is it that rears up the skeleton of those lofty forests, and blasts them with the quick lightning at His pleasure? The same Being who gave to you a country on the other side of the waters, and gave ours to us; and by this title we will defend it."—*Quoted by Lord Erskine.*

"See we not that heaven is all for earth? Doth it cause one sprig of an herb to grow in itself? It giveth all it hath, and is perpetually content with what it is. So God is all for us, as if man were His God, saith St. Thomas. If we be miserable, He is not therefore disdainful: if He be high, He is not therefore far distant from our inferior condition. He is all, in all things; ever present; continually doing somewhat for our well-being."—*N. Caussin.*

A legend says that a powerful and rich king, troubled in heart in spite of all his possessions, went to a holy dervise, and asked him for the secret of happiness. The dervise led him forth in front of a high rock, on the top of which an eagle had built her nest. Then the dervise said, "Imitate that bird: build thy throne in heaven, and thou shalt reign there unmolested and in peace."

"Let my Lord

"I am not." I enquir'd of creatures all,
In generall,
Contain'd therein; they with one voice proclaime,
That none amongst them challeng'd such a name.

I askt the seas and all the deepes below,
My God to know.
I askt the reptiles, and whatever is
In the abysse;
Even from the shrimp to the leviathan
Enquiry ran;
But in those deserts which no line can sound,
The God I sought for was not to be found.

I askt the aire, if that were He? but, lo,
It told me, no.
I, from the towering eagle to the wren,
Demanded then,
If any feather'd fowle 'mongst them were such?
But they all, much
Offended with my question, in full quire,
Answer'd, "To finde that God thou must look higher."

I askt the heavens, sun, moon, and stars; but they
Said, "We obey
The God thou seek'st." I askt, what eye or eare
Could see or heare;
What in the world I might descry or know,
Above, below:
With an unanimous voice, all these things said,
"We are not God, but we by Him were made."

I askt the world's great universal masse,
If that God was?
Which, with a mighty and strong voice reply'd,
As stupefy'd,
"I am not He, O man! for know, that I
By Him on high
Was fashion'd first of nothing, then instated,
And sway'd by Him by whom I was created."

A scrutiny within myself, I then
Even thus began:—
"O man, what art thou?" What more could I say,
Than dust and clay!
Fraile, mortal, fading, a meere puffe, a blaste,
That cannot laste;
Enthron'd to-day, to-morrow in an urne;
Form'd from that earthe to which I must returne.

I askt myself, what this great God might be
That fashion'd me.
I answer'd—the all-potent, solely immense,
Surpassing sense;
Unspeakable, inscrutable, eternall,
Lord over all;
The only terrible, strong, just, and true,
Who hath no end, and no beginning knew.

He is the well of life : for He doth give
To all that live
Both breath and being : He is the Creator
Both of the water,
Earth, aire, and fire. Of all things that subsist,
He hath the list ;
Of all the heavenly host, or what earth claims,
He keeps the scroll, and calls them by their names.

And now, my God, by Thine illumining grace,
Thy glorious face,
(So far forth as it may discover'd be),
Methinks I see ;
And though invisible and infinite
To human sight,
Thou, in Thy mercy, justice, truth, appearest,
In which to our weake senses Thou comest nearest.

Oh make us apte to seeke, and quick to finde,
Thou God most kinde ;
Give us love, hope, and faith, in Thee to trust,
Thou God most just ;
Remit all our offences, we entreat,
Most good, most great ;
Grant that our willing, though unworthy, quest,
May, through Thy grace, admit us 'mongst the blest.[b]

12—14. (12) **woe**, *etc.*, better, "Oh the uproar of many people." The Prophet hears the gathering of the hosts to carry out God's judgments. **rushing**, indicating the haste of forced marches. (13) **rebuke them**, with reference to the sudden and overwhelming discomfiture of Sennacherib. **rolling thing**, marg. *thistledown* ; or whirling dust ; or stubble. (14) **evening-tide**, when the sirocco blast, or smite of plague, came on the Assyrian host.[a]

The destruction of Sennacherib (*vv.* 12—14).—I. The foe—numerous, mighty, furious. II. The invasion—sudden, alarming, terrible. III. The defence—sufficient, available. IV. The defeat—utter, signal, ruinous. V. The interval of suspense—short, transient. VI. The triumph—complete, inspires confidence.[b]

Care of God.—"Do you see this lock of hair?" said an old man to me. "Yes ; but what of it? It is, I suppose, the curl from the head of a dear child long since gone to God." "It is not. It is a lock of my own hair ; and it is now nearly seventy years since it was cut from this head." "But why do you prize a lock of your own hair so much?" "It has a story belonging to it, and a strange one. I keep it thus with care because it speaks to me more of God, and of His special care, than anything else I possess. I was a little child of four years old, with long curly locks, which, in sun, or rain, or wind, hung down my cheeks uncovered. One day my father went into the wood to cut up a log, and I went with him. I was standing a little way behind him, or rather at his side, watching with interest the strokes of the heavy axe, as it went up and came down upon the wood, sending off splinters with every stroke in all directions. Some of the splinters fell at my feet, and I eagerly stooped to pick them up. In doing so I stumbled forward, and in a moment my curly head lay upon the log. I had fallen just at the moment Jesus—since He willeth to do so—weave my bit-and-span length of time with white and black, weal and woe, with the Bridegroom's coming and His sad departure, as warp and woof in one web ; and let the rose be neighboured with the thorn : yet hope, that maketh not ashamed, hath written a letter to the mourners in Zion, that it shall not be long so. When we are over the water, Christ shall cry 'Down crosses, and up heaven for evermore.'" —*Rutherford.*

b Heywood.

a "The Prophet designs to show by this example that all enemies of the kingdom of God must finally succumb, and that there is therefore no reason to fear them, if Israel would but be faithful to Jehovah." —*Nägelsbach.*

"Celestial love, with the affections of good and truth, and the perceptions thence derived, and at the same time with the delights of these affections and the thoughts thence derived, may be compared to a tree with beautiful branches, leaves, and fruits ; the life's love is that tree ; the branches, with the leaves, are the affections of good and truth, with their perceptions ; and the

fruits are the delights of the affections, with their thoughts."—*Swedenborg.*

b Dr. Lyth.

"It is the nature of every artificer to tender and esteem his own work; and if God should not love His creatures, it would reflect some disparagement upon His workmanship, that He should make anything that He could not own. God's power never produces what His goodness cannot embrace. God oftentimes, in the same man, distinguishes between the sinner and the creature; as a creature, He can love him, while as a sinner He doth afflict him."—*Dr. South.*

when the axe was coming down with all its force. It was too late to stop the blow. Down came the axe. I screamed, and my father fell to the ground in terror. He could not stay the stroke, and in the blindness which the sudden horror caused, he thought he had killed his boy. We soon recovered—I from my fright, and he from his terror. He caught me in his arms, and looked at me from head to foot, to find out the deadly wound which he was sure he had inflicted. Not a drop of blood nor a scar was to be seen. He knelt upon the grass, and gave thanks to a gracious God. Having done so he took up his axe, and found a few hairs upon its edge. He turned to the log he had been splitting, and there was a single curl of his boy's hair, sharply cut through and laid upon the wood. How great the escape! It was as if an angel had turned aside the edge at the moment it was descending on my head. With renewed thanks upon his lips he took up the curl, and went home with me in his arms. That lock he kept all his days, as a memorial of God's care and love. That lock he left to me on his death-bed. I keep it with care. It tells me of my father's God and mine. It rebukes unbelief and alarm. It bids me trust Him for ever. I have had many tokens of fatherly love in my threescore years and ten, but somehow this speaks most to my heart. It is the oldest and perhaps the most striking. It used to speak to my father's heart; it now speaks to mine." What say you, my dear readers? Is not this an instance of delivering mercy on the part of our gracious God? And this God is the same kind Being who gave you life, and has watched over and cared for you until now.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

1, 2. (1) **woe**, better, ho! **shadowing with wings**, spreading out her eagle wings of empire:[a] or "resounding with wings," squadrons of armed men. **Ethiopia**, or *Cush*, the land beyond the White and Blue Nile. Highland Ethiopia. At the time referred to Tirhakah was king of Ethiopia, and a monarch of great military renown. The ultimate object of Sennacherib was the conquest of Egypt, so news of his destruction was good news for Tirhakah. (2) **ambassadors**, to Israel. The country of Canaan lay in the route of Assyria, so Tirhakah sought defensive alliance with Israel. **sea**, prob. Red Sea. **bulrushes**, light Nile boats. **scattered**, *etc.*, these terms suit the depressed and afflicted kingdoms of Canaan.[b] **rivers . . spoiled**, for the people of the rivers, *i.e.* the Egyptians.

a "The fig. of a disk with double wings is a symbol of Ethiopian royalty."—*Canon Cook.*

"The reference of the fig. may be to the protection wh. Egypt promised to the Jews."—*Henderson.*

b "Some take the reference to be to Ethiopia, and Israel is to send messengers of Sennac.'s defeat. Then the words are regarded as indicating the vigour and martial energy of Tirhakah's people."—*So Wordsworth.*

Floods in Egypt.—Great injury has often been done to the lands contiguous to large and rapid rivers, especially when inundations have happened. Various occurrences of this nature are mentioned by different travellers, which clearly show the meaning of the Prophet in these words. Sonnini relates a circumstance of this kind, to which he was a witness in passing down the Nile. He says, "The reis and the sailors were asleep upon the beach: I had passed half of the night watching, and I composed myself to sleep, after giving the watch to two of my companions, but they too had sunk into slumber. The kanja, badly fastened against the shore, broke loose, and the current carried it away with the utmost rapidity. We were all asleep; not one

See *Bp. Horsley, Crit. Disq. in Bibl. Crit.* i. 229.

of us, not even the boatmen stretched upon the sand, perceived our manner of sailing down at the mercy of the current. After having floated with the stream for the space of a good league, the boat hurried along with violence, struck with a terrible crash against the shore, precisely a little below the place from whence the greatest part of the loosened earth fell down. Awakened by this furious shock, we were not slow in perceiving the critical situation into which we were thrown. The kanja, repelled by the land, which was cut perpendicularly, and driven towards it again by the violence of the current, turned round in every direction, and dashed against the shore in such a manner as excited an apprehension that it would be broken to pieces. The darkness of the night, the frightful noise which the masses separated from the shore spread far and wide as they fell into deep water—the bubbling which they excited, the agitation of which communicated itself to the boat, rendered our awakening a very melancholy one. There was no time to be lost. I made my companions take the oars, which the darkness prevented us from finding so soon as we could have wished; I sprung to the helm, and encouraging my new and very inexperienced sailors, we succeeded in making our escape from a repetition of shocks by which we must at length all have inevitably perished: for scarcely had we gained, after several efforts, the middle of the river than a piece of hardened mud, of an enormous size, tumbled down at the very spot we had just quitted, which must, had we been but a few minutes later, have carried us to the bottom."[c]

3, 4. (3) **all ye**, *etc.*, this is the call to the nations to learn a lesson fr. Sennach.'s overthrow. See what Jehovah can do! **ensign . . mountains**, calling His angel hosts to the Mount of Olives, wh. point the Assyr. army had reached. (4) **take my rest**, for a time it seemed as if God did not notice the progress of the Assyr. **consider**, look on, watch, wait My time. **clear . . herbs**, *i.e.* God was really ready to give sunshine or shade when each was needed. Or, God was looking on the prosperity of the Assyr., which seemed to be steady as sunshine or dew.[a]

Grace of God as dew.—The grace of God is like dew to the barren and parched hearts of men, to make them fruitful. And there are many things wherein the proportion and resemblance stand. I. None can give the dew but God. It comes from above; it is of a celestial original; the nativity thereof is from "the womb of the morning." None can give grace but God. II. Dew is the fruit of a serene, clear, and quiet heaven: for dew never falleth either in scorching or tempestuous weather, as philosophers have observed. In like manner, the grace, favour, and blessings of God are the fruits of His reconciled affection towards us. III. Dew is abundant and innumerable. Who can number the drops of dew on the ground, or the "hairs of little rain?"—for so they are called in the original, because of their smallness and number (Deut. xxxii. 2). So Hushai expresseth the multitude of all Israel: "We will light upon him as the dew falleth upon the ground." Such is the grace of God unto His people after their conversion; unsearchable, it cannot be comprehended or measured, nor brought under any number or account (Ps. lxxi. 15, cxxxix. 17, 18). IV. Dew is silent, slow, insensible in its descent. You cannot see, hear, feel, or smell its coming; you see it when it is come, but cannot observe how it comes. In this manner was

vv. 1, 2. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 581.

"A Christian man's life is laid in the loom of time to a pattern which he does not see, but God does; and his heart is a shuttle. On one side of the loom is sorrow, and on the other is joy; and the shuttle, struck alternately by each, flies back and forth, carrying the thread, which is white or black as the pattern needs. And in the end, when God shall lift up the finished garment, and all its changing hues shall glance out, it will then appear that the deep and dark colours were as needful to beauty as the bright and high colours."—*Beecher.*

c Trav. in Egypt.

a "This quiet observant waiting of God's, the Prophet compares to that weather wh. is most favourable for maturing the harvest, warm days and dewy nights."—*Nägelsbach.*

"God would let the enemy proceed in the execution of his purposes until they were nearly accomplished."—*J. A. Alexander.*

"And you, dear daughters of the humid air, begotten by the influence of the moon, you fruitful nourishers of herbs and flowers,—fresh morning dews,—now shut your silver urns, for now the fields have satis-

fied their thirst, and meals have drunk their fill." — *Prologue to Phillis of Scyros.*

b Bp. Reynolds.

"A globe of dew, filling in the morning new some eyed flower whose young leaves waken on an unimagined world: constellated suns unshaken, orbits measureless, are furl'd in that frail and fading sphere, with ten millions gather'd there, to tremble, gleam, and disappear."—*Shelley*

"I must go seek some dewdrops here, and hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear."—*Shakespeare.*

"The dews of the evening most carefully shun; those tears of the sky for the loss of the sun."—*Chesterfield.*

c And. Marvel.

a Such a multitude as might furnish a feast for a whole year.

"A certain emperor coming into Egypt, to show the zeal he had to the public good, said to the Egyptians, 'Draw from me as from your river Nilus;' but what can be drawn from a man but hopes, which swell like bubbles of water till they burst? It is from God that we must draw, for He is a fountain which perpetually distilleth, who quencheth the thirst of all the world, and hath God pleased to fill the world with the knowledge of His Gospel, and with the grace of His Spirit, by quiet, small, and, as it were, by insensible means. V. Dew is of a soft and benign nature, which gently insinuateth and worketh itself into the ground, and by degree moisteneth and mollifieth it. In like manner, the Spirit, the Grace, the Word of God is of a searching, insinuating, softening quality. VI. Dew is of a vegetating and quickening nature. So is the Grace, and Word, and Spirit of God. VII. Dew is of a refreshing and comforting nature—causes the face of things to flourish with beauty and delight, especially in the hot countries of the East. So God promises to be unto His people in their troubles, "as a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." His grace gives comfort, peace, joy, strength, and the beauty of holiness to them.[b]

A drop of dew.—

See how the orient dew,
Shed from the bosom of the morn,
Into the blowing roses,
Yet careless of its mansion new,
For the clear region where 'twas born
Round in itself encloses:
And in its little globe's extent,
Frames as it can its native element.
How it the purple flower does slight:
Scarce touching where it lies;
But giving back upon the skies,
Shines with a mournful light,
Like its own tear,
Because so long divided from the sphere.
Restless it rolls and insecure,
Trembling lest it grow impure,
Till the warm sun pities its pain,
And to the skies exhales it back again.[c]

5, 6. (5) afore, *i.e.* just immediately before; when the invader is feeling perfectly sure of accomplishing his purpose; then, and in the most humiliating way, his desolation shall come. bud is perfect, or past, changed into ripe fruit, just ready for gathering. cut off, fig. of ruinous destruction of a fruit tree. (6) left together, *i.e.* the carcases of thousands of the Assyr. army. They shall be a prey to the ravenous mountain birds, who shall have a long feast on the slain.[a]

Use of nature to man.—Every part of nature seems to pay its tribute to man, in the great variety of kinds or tribes, as well as the prodigious number of individuals of each various tribe, of all creatures. There are so many beasts, so many birds, so many insects, so many reptiles, so many trees, so many plants upon the land: so many fishes, sea-plants, and other creatures, in the waters; so many minerals, metals, and fossils, in the subterraneous regions: that there is nothing wanting to the use of man, or any other creature of this lower world. The munificence of the Creator is such, that there is enough to supply the wants and conveniences of all creatures, in all places, all ages, and upon all occasions. And this boundless variety is a most wise provision for the uses of this world in every age and in every place. God has created nothing in vain. Some things are for food, some for physic, some for habitation, some for utensils.

some for tools and instruments of work, and some for recreation and pleasure, either to man, or to some of the inferior creatures themselves. It is evident that all the creatures of God (beasts, birds, insects, and plants) have, or may have, their several uses even among men. For although in one place things may lie neglected, and out of use, yet in another place they may be of great use. So what has been rejected in one age has been received in another; as the new discoveries in physic, and alterations of diet, sufficiently witness. Or if there be many things of little immediate use to man, in this or any other age, yet to other creatures they may afford food or physic, or be of some necessary use. How many trees and plants, nay, even the very carcases of animals, the very dust of the earth, and the prodigious swarms of insects in the air and in the waters, of no apparent use to man, yet are food, or medicine, or places of retreat and habitation to birds, fishes, reptiles, and insects themselves; for whose happy and comfortable subsistence the bountiful Creator has liberally provided, as well as for that of man.[b]

7. in that time, the thing referred to in this *v.* cannot be certainly ascertained. Some think the hearty return of depressed and afflicted Israel to God is meant.[a] Others apply to Ethiopia, and think that, on reception of the news of Sennac.'s defeat, Tirhakah offered some solemn acknowledgment and homage to Jehovah.[b] **to the place,** *etc.*, the simplest explanation is that some present came fr. Ethiopia to Zion in grateful acknowledgment of this deliverance.

Earthly judgments (*v.* 7).—I. Are intended not to destroy, but to benefit mankind. II. Must ultimately command attention and belief. III. Then respectful homage will be presented in Zion. IV. Even the most distant and unlikely nations shall be converted unto Him.[c]

God—the great first cause.—

Great System of perfections! mighty Cause
Of causes mighty! Cause uncaused! Sole root
Of Nature, that luxuriant growth of God!
First Father of effects! that progeny
Of endless series; where the golden chain's
Last link admits a period, who can tell?
Father of all that is or heard, or hears!
Father of all that is or seen, or sees!
Father of all that is, or shall arise!
Father of this immeasurable mass
Of matter multiform; or dense, or rare;
Opaque, or lucid; rapid, or at rest;
Minute, or passing bound! in each extreme
Of like amaze, and mystery, to man.
Father of these bright millions of the night!
Of which the least full godhead had proclaimed,
And thrown the gazer on his knee. Or, say,
Is appellation higher still Thy choice?
Father of matter's temporary lord!
Father of spirits! nobler offspring! sparks
Of high paternal glory; rich endowed
With various measures, and with various modes
Of instinct, reason, intuition; beams
More pale, or bright from day divine, to break

in Himself but one want, which is that all men should still thirst for His bounty and have it."—*Caussin.*

"I consider it the best part of an education to have been born and brought up in the country."—*Atcott.*

b Derham.

a Others make it a prophecy of return from exile.

b "It is curious to note the fact that Abyssinia (Ethiopia) is the only great Christian power in the E. at this day."—*J. A. Alexander.*

c Dr. Lyth.

"Justice and mercy are the two arms of God, which embrace, bear, and govern the whole world: they are the two engines of the great Archimedes, which make heaven descend upon earth, and earth mount to heaven. They are the bass and treble strings of the great lute of heaven, which make all the harmonies and tunable symphonies of this universe. Now, as mercy is infinite, so is justice. The Divine essence holdeth these two perfections as the two scales of the balance,—always equally poised."—*N. Caussin.*

"That you may find success, let me tell you how to proceed. To-night begin your

great plan of life. You have but one life to live; and it is most important that you do not make a mistake. To-night begin carefully. Fix your eye on the fortieth year of your age, and then say to yourself, 'At the age of forty, I will be an industrious man, a benevolent man, a well-read man, a religious man, and a useful man. I resolve; and I will stand to it.' My young friends, pray to God that this resolution may stand like the oak, which cannot be wind-shaken."—*C. Brooks.*

d Young.

The darker matter organised (the ware
Of all created spirit): beams, that rise
Each over other in superior light,
Till the last ripens into lustre strong,
Of next approach to godhead. Father fond
(Far fonder than e'er bore that name on earth)
Of intellectual beings! beings blest
With powers to please Thee! not of passive ply
To laws they know not; beings lodged in seats
Of well-adapted joys, in different domes
Of this imperial palace for thy sons;
Of this proud, populous, well-policed,
Though boundless habitation, planned by Thee:
Whose several clans their several climates suit;
And transposition, doubtless, would destroy.
Or, oh! indulge, immortal King, indulge
A title less august indeed, but more
Endearing. Ah! how sweet in human ears;
Sweet in our ears and triumph in our hearts!
Father of Immortality to man![d]

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

1, 2. (1) **burden,** or sentence upon. **Egypt,** called also Mizraim, and Ham, from its founder, Ge. x. 6.[a] The Egyptians called their land *Cham,* i.e. black. **rideth,** *etc.,* the fig. is of holding an assize; to it God goeth in state. **cloud,** the Scrip. sign of august majesty.[b] The *swift* cloud here is *light* cloud, wh. therefore moves swiftly. **idols,** lit. *nonentities,* a striking word when the grandeur of the idol-figures of Eg. is considered.[c] When this prophecy was given, a priest was on the Eg. throne, and idolatry was fully established. **heart . . melt,** fig. for loss of national confidence. (2) **against his brother,** *i.e.* one part of the country against the other. Civil war does more mischief to a nation than foreign war.

Judgment upon Egypt (*vv.* 1—17).—I. Effected by the direct interposition of God, a cloud comes from cloudless Egypt, comes from heaven, moves slowly. II. Affects its social conditions, puts contempts on its idolatry, dissolves the bonds of society, destroys its superstitious hopes, subjects it to an oppressive tyranny. III. Affects its physical conditions, dries up the river, ruins vegetation, destroys the fisheries, puts an arrest upon trade and manufactures. IV. Affects its intellectual condition: the wise become fools, the brave cowards, the industrious idle, the people are filled with dread of the anger of the Lord.[d]

Historical notes on Egypt.—Egypt is supposed to be a contraction of Aia-gyptos = land of Kyptos; or, the black land. According to ancient mythology, the name is derived from Ægyptus, the son of Belus. 1. Egypt, the Mizraim of the LXX., is called Matzor (Is. xix. 6. xxxvii. 25; Mic. vii. 12); Eretz Ham = land of Ham (Ps. lxxviii. 51. cv. 23); Rahab (Is. xxx. 7. li. 9; Ps. lxxxvii. 4); Sihor (Is. xxiii. 3); and house of bondmen (Ex xiii. 3. 14; Deu. vii. 8). In Scripture the name is often used in the singular misr., and Bochart is of opinion that Mizraim, the dual form, refers to Upper and Lower Egypt. To this day the Arabs

a Egypt stretched fr. the Medit. Sea on the N. to Ethiopia on the S., with the Red Sea on the E., and the Lybian desert on the W. It was intersected by the Nile throughout the whole of its length.

b Da. vii. 13; Mat. xxiv. 30; Re. i. 7.

c Of the colossal fig. of Rameses *Dean Stanley* says, "Nothing wh. now exists in the world can give any notion of what the effect must have been when he was erect."

d Dr. Lyth.

Ex. xii. 12; Je. xliii. 7—13.

Dr. R. Hawker, ix. 759.

vv. 2—4. *Abp. Drummond* (Nov. 5), *Serv. bef. H. of Com.* i.

call it misr. 2. Race: it was peopled by Mizraim's posterity (Gen. x. 6, 13, 14); idolatrous (Ex. xii. 12; Nu. xxxiii. 4; Is. xix. 1; Ez. xxix. 7); practised magic (Ex. vii. 11, 12, 22, viii. 7); were ruled by kings called Pharaohs (Gen. xii. 14, 15, xl. 1, 2; Ex. i. 8, 22); aided by a governor (Gen. xli. 41—44); and princes and counsellors (Gen. xii. 15: Is. xix. 11); people were superstitious (Is. xix. 3); hospitable (Gen. xlv. 5, 6; 1 Ki. xi. 18); often intermarried with strangers (Gen. xxi. 21; 1 Ki. iii. 1, xi. 19; 1 Chr. ii. 34, 35); hated shepherds (Gen. xlvi. 34); abhorred sacrifice of oxen (Ex. viii. 26); they were not to be hated by Israel (Deu. xxiii. 7); received into congregation in third generation (Deu. xxiii. 8). 3. Customs: mode of entertaining (Gen. xliii. 32, 34); diet (Nu. xi. 5); embalming (Gen. l. 3). 4. Political character: proud (Ez. xxix. 3, xxx. 6); pompous (Ez. xxxii. 12); mighty (Is. xxx. 2, 3); ambitious (Jer. xlvi. 8); treacherous (Is. xxxvi. 6; Ez. xxix. 6, 7); yet offered an asylum to strangers (Gen. xii. 10, xlvii. 4; 1 Ki. xi. 17, 40; 2 Ki. xxv. 26; Matt. ii. 12, 13). 5. Its armies: described (Ex. xiv. 7—9); captured Gezer (1 Ki. ix. 16); besieged Jerusalem (1 Ki. xiv. 25, 26); invaded Assyria and killed Josiah (2 Ki. xxiii. 29); deposed Jehoahaz, and made Judæa tributary (2 Ki. xxiii. 31—35).[e]

3, 4. (3) **counsel thereof**, the policy of the governors: the confidence in statesmanship. The sagacity of the rulers should fail.[a] **seek**, for advice. **charmers**, *etc.*, the sign of want of confidence in the government.[b] (4) **cruel lord**, diff. opinions are held as to the king or conqueror referred to. The first reference may well be to Psammetichus, who combined the 12 rival states of Egypt under his sway, B.C. 670, and called in foreign aid to support his dominion. But the prophecy may include later troubles of Eg., under Sargon, Cambyses, or Darius Ochus.[c]

Geographical notes, etc., on Egypt.—1. Situation: in Africa, at the N.E. corner. 2. Extent: about 480 miles long, by 250 at its widest. Area capable of cultivation about 16,000 square miles, or about half area of Ireland. 3. Boundaries: (Ez. xxix. 10) on north the Mediterranean; east, Red Sea and Isthmus of Suez; south, Ancient Ethiopia; west, Lybia. 4. Divisions: (1) Lower east, called also the *delta*. This portion borders on the Mediterranean south, and being enclosed by the two chief mouths of the Nile, takes the form of the Greek *delta*, or D., thus—Δ. This district is about 80 miles from north to south. (2) Central Egypt, or Heptanomis: extending about 150 miles further south. (3) Upper Egypt, or Thebais, reaching still further south about 250 miles. 5. Physical features: Egypt may be described as the valley of one great river—the Nile (Gen. xli. 1—3; Ex. i. 22). This river is constantly bringing down a quantity of alluvial soil, which it deposits throughout its whole course. At the *delta* this soil has been deposited to a thickness, in the banks, of 30 feet (Amos viii. 8). Hence Egypt is slowly undergoing a process of elevation. Little rain falls in Egypt, about four or five showers annually at Thebes (Deu. xi. 10, 11)—(Wilkinson). Absence of rain is compensated by copious night dews. 6. Productions: a great corn country; to this day its corn exportations very great. Turkey is mainly dependent on Egypt for corn, and it was anciently the granary of the Romans. It produces also large quantities of flax and cotton. The "fine linen" of Egypt was famous. Many birds, of different kinds, "the numbers number-

"Life, like their Bibles, coolly men turn o'er: hence unexperienced children of three-score. True, all men think, of course, as all men dream; and if they slightly think, 'tis much the same."—*Young.*

"All that the wisdom of the proud can teach is to be stubborn or sullen under misfortune."—*Goldsmith.*

e **Topics.**

a The land of Eg. fell into a decline; every one did as he pleased; long years there was no sovereign for them that had the supreme power over the rest of things. The land of Eg. belonged to the princes of the districts. One killed another in jealousy.

From papyrus of Ramses III., discovered by *Harris*, in 1855.

b Is. viii. 19.

c "The king here mentioned is identified by J. D. Michaelis with Sethos, by Grotius, Gesenius, and others, with Psammetichus, by the Rabbins with Sennacherib, by Hitzig and Hendewerk with Sargon, by Clericus with Nebuchadnezzar, by Vitringa with Cambyses or Ochus, and by Cocceius with Charlemagne."—*J. A. Alexander.*

"We rise in glory as we sink in pride."—*Young.*

less, of all manner of birds—vultures and cormorants, and geese, flying like constellations through the blue heavens: pelicans standing in long array on the water-side; hoopoos and ziczacs, and the (so-called) white ibis, the gentle symbol of the god Osiris, in his robes of white;—walking under one's very feet."

a Is. xviii. 2, xxvii. 1; Nah. iii. 8.

5—7. (5) waters, of their river, on wh. the prosperity of their country so directly depended. sea, the Nile appears to have been called the sea.[a] *Bahr-en-Nil*, or the Nile-Sea. wasted, or parched up, by withholding of the usual flood.[b] (6) turn .. away, better rend., "and the branches of the river shall become loathsome." brooks of defence, those acting as moats to fortified places. reeds and flags,[c] growing on the mud banks. (7) paper reeds, or *marsh grass.* sown, in garden or field.

"It was called a sea, not merely bec. of its normal breadth within its own banks, but also bec. it really spreads out like a sea at the time of its overflow." — *Nägelsbach.*

b "The Nile, being the source of her plenty, was worshipped by the Eg.; and the Div. judgment on the Nile was like a snuffing of her god."—*Wordsworth.*

c Ex. ii. 3.

See also under verses 11, 12.

The paper reeds.—The tourist in Egypt, looking for Bible illustrations, is likely to be disappointed when he finds no "bulrushes" or "reeds," answering to those spoken of in the history of the infant Moses. No sign of flag, reed, or other aquatic plant appears, either along the Nile or elsewhere. Yet there must have been such plants in former times. The monuments depict them in great variety—the lotus being a favourite. And the rolls of papyrus found in the tombs testify to the existence of such plants, the papyrus having been made from the bark of the paper reed. How interesting to the Scripture student to find that the disappearance of these plants was specifically predicted by the Scripture writers! Says the Prophet Isaiah, "The reeds and flags shall wither; the paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and everything sown by the brooks shall wither, be driven away, and be no more." But the question comes, why do not aquatic plants now grow in Egypt? Are not the physical conditions now existing in this country the same which have always prevailed? And does the Divine fiat now resist natural laws, for the fulfilment of prophecy? I answer that aquatic plants,—which, as Herodotus testifies, were extremely valuable, —were reared, in the time of Egypt's prosperity, by artificial means—involving the preparation of reservoirs and "brooks." Thus, too, by means of "ponds" and "sluices," the fish were multiplied. And the prediction of Isaiah relates to the destruction of the nice arrangements of artificial life, on which depended the country's high prosperity. And how entirely natural that the bathing-place of Pharaoh's daughter should be a cultivated garden bordering the Nile, where seclusion could be had.[d]

See that you personally know and daily live upon Christ.

d *The Far East*, by *Dr. Burt.*

8—10. (8) fishers, whose trade so manifestly depended on the waters. (9) flax, wh. also depends for its growth upon the irrigation of the fields by the river. *Fine* flax appears to mean *hatchelled*, or combed flax. networks, or *white works*, with prob. reference to cotton.[a] (10) purposes, or foundations. Gesenius thinks the higher and lower classes of society are put together in this r., as alike affected by the failure of the Nile. The higher classes being called the *pillars* or foundations of the state; the lower classes being mentioned as those who labour for hire. sluices, or dams to make the gentlemen's fish-ponds.

a "Both flax and cotton abounded in Eg., and the manufacturing of linen and cotton cloths afforded support to many thousands of its inhabitants. In ancient times linen was worn by the people generally: the priests officiated in linen dresses; and we know that the cloths forming the bandages in which the mummies were wrapped were of linen."—*Kitto.*

Fish-ponds.—This may allude to the enclosures or weirs which the Orientals construct most skilfully for catching fishes. They put down across a stream a vast number of stakes, which extend some hundreds of yards, and which resemble a low hedge. When

there has been a flood or influx of the tide, the water rises considerably above the tops of the stakes, and the fish go up with the flow; and whilst they are engaged in seeking food at the bottom of the stream, the water gradually and imperceptibly retires, till at length it becomes so shallow as to prevent them from escaping over the hedge. They are then easily taken. At other times the ground is so staked out as to leave a convenient opening, through which, when the fishes attempt to retire into the deep water, they are caught in nets placed there by the wily fishermen. Kings and men of high rank have large ponds, where fish are sacredly kept, none being allowed to molest them. In a few years the surface of the water exhibits a mass of living creatures.[b]

11, 12. (11) Zoan, the ancient capital of the Pharaohs. *Tanis*, at the N.E. of Egypt.[a] Situated in the Delta of the Nile, and so esp. affected by drying up of the waters. fools, utterly foolish. "None seemed able to foresee the impending ruin, or avert the national calamities." how say ye, in your boastings; laying claim to ancestorial wisdom and royal descent, yet able to counsel nothing to any purpose. (12) where, *etc.*, appeal of the Prophet, as looking in vain to find efficient statesmen.[b]

Additional note on v. 7.—Never had prophecy greater circumstances of improbability to overcome, and never was prediction more completely fulfilled. The indispensable papyrus in the time of Isaiah flourished through the whole of the Thebaid, Heptanomos, and the Delta, as the three divisions of ancient Egypt were named. Of its utility no European reader can form an adequate idea. Stringent laws were established for its protection and cultivation, and from its first appearance to maturity the papyrus was considered to be under the especial care of local deities; it was planted, tended, and cut with an almost religious ceremonial. Adaptable for various uses, not only paper, cloth, and brushes, but the roughest and most delicate manufactures were produced from it alike. Sails, cordage, and baskets for shipping, sandals, hats, skirts, carpets, chairs, and seats for domestic service were made of it. Men and animals fed upon the tender shoots. A syrup was obtained and medicine extracted from it. It formed the cradle of the Nubian baby; it decorated the canopy of Pharaoh's throne; it was scattered in processions through the streets; it was painted on the houses; it was wrought in granite on the temples. The Egyptian ladies twined the living blossoms in their hair, or wore it in chains around their necks as an amulet. Princes, priests, and peasants offered it on the altar in commemoration of the dead. The papyrus was the plaything of the child and the sceptre of the god, the glory of the country, the staple of its commerce, and the hieroglyphic emblem of its name. By withholding the supply of the papyrus, Ptolemy Philadelphus was enabled to repress the formation of a rival library by the Pergamean kings; while, by opening the markets of the Delta, the poetry of Greece and the philosophy of Rome were transmitted throughout the whole of the then known world. Alas for the permanence of mundane glories! thirty centuries of oppression, superstition, and neglect have dried up the artificial lakes in which the plant was cultivated. Rush after rush has been cut down to warm an Arab's bath, or litter a pasha's horse, and no successors have been planted. The hot

dages of the nunneries are linen."—*Henderson.*

"Pride, which inspires us with so much envy, serves also to moderate it."—*Rochefoucauld.*

b Roberts.

a Nu. xiii. 22; Ps. lxxviii. 43. "I cannot recollect any (ruin of ancient city) that impressed me so deeply with the sense of fallen and deserted magnificence."—*Macgregor.*

b Comp. Is. xli. 22, 26, xliii. 9, xlv. 21, xlviii 14. "The voyage of life should be right across the ocean, whose waters never shrink, and where the keel never rubs the bottom. But men are afraid to venture, and hang upon the coast, and explore lagoons, or swing at anchor in wind-sheltered bays. Some men put their keel into riches, some into sensuous pleasure, some into friendship; and all these are shallow for anything that draws as deep as the human soul does. God's work in each age, indicated by the great movements of His providence, is the only thing deep enough for the heart. We ought to begin life as at the source of a river, growing deeper every league to the sea: whereas, in fact,

thousands are like men who enter the mouths of rivers, and sail upwards finding less and less water every day; and in old age they lie shrunk and gaping upon the dry gravel." —*Beecher.*

wind of the south, and the sands of the desert, have exterminated the lovely paper rush in the empire of the Pharaohs, and there is not a single indigenous papyrus in the whole of Egypt proper. A stream in Sicily, and the marshes of Merom in Palestine, alone contain the nearly extinct vegetable; and in the conservatories of London, Sion, and Kew, England actually possesses more living papyri than can now be found from Syene to Alexandria.

13, 14. (13) Noph, or *Memphis.* "The second capital, and celebrated Necropolis of Egypt."[a] Psammetichus made this the capital of the kingdom. stay . . tribes, or corners, cornerstones of her castes, *i.e.* the princes and priests.[b] Possibly the military class was predominant at Memphis, and the sacerdotal at Tanis.[c] (14) perverse spirit, or spirit of dizziness. Divine judgments on a nation may come as the confusion of its counsellors. God's judgments may as properly fall on *minds* as on bodies, or on estates. as a drunken, an image wh. is designed to put these princes to shame.

Human views of God.—One stands in Milan Cathedral, under the nave, and looks up into those mysterious depths, until it seems as though he would exhale and fly into space. There, in the brooding darkness, the feeling of reverence weighs upon his very soul. And the Milan Cathedral to him is that which it seems to be when the low-lying sun has shot through the window and kindled the whole interior. At the very same moment there stands upon the roof another man, and about him are those three thousand statues carved and standing in their several niches and pinnacles; and everything looks like the bristling frost-work in a forest of icicles; and far above and far on every side swell the lines of beauty. How different is his conception from that of the man who stands in the nave below! But, at the same time, a man stands outside looking at the cathedral's fretted front and its wondrous beauty and diversity, while a fellow-companion and traveller is on the other side looking also at the exterior. Here are four men—one before the structure, one behind it, one on the roof, and one in the interior; and each of them, as he gives his account of the Milan Cathedral, speaks of that which made the strongest impression upon his mind, and the most carried him away. But it takes the concurrent report of these four men to represent that vast work of architecture. Is it so with a man-built cathedral? and shall it not be so with the mighty God who is from eternity to eternity? Is there any man that can take the reed of his understanding and lay it along the line of God's latitude and longitude as if He were measurable as a city? Is there any man who can cast his plummet into the depths of the Infinite, and say, "I have sounded God to the bottom?" Is there any man that has an imagination by which he can fly so high that he can say, "I have reached the point above which God is not?" Is there any man who "by searching can find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Each man learns a little, and learns that which he is most susceptible of learning. Each man has that conception of God which he is capable of receiving. This is added to the common stock. And it is these concurrent differences, these harmonious separations, that make the symphony of knowledge. We do not want unison: we want harmony. Harmony is made by different parts, and not by the repetition of the same sounds and tones.[d]

[a] *Henderson.*

The name signifies *the haven of the good*, in reference to their being buried there.

The word is *Moph* in Ho. ix. 6.

[b] "The class on which the whole Egyp. body politic rests, the priestly class, leads the whole land astray."—*Nägelsbach.*

[c] *Knobel.*

cr. 13, 14. *Bp. Warburton*, x. 17.

"'Hold thy peace!' says Wisdom to Folly. 'Hold thy peace!' replies Folly to Wisdom. 'Fly!' cries Light to Darkness; and Darkness echoes back, 'Fly!' The latter chase has been going on since the beginning of the world, without an inch of ground gained on either side. May we believe that the result has been different in the contest between wisdom and folly?"—*Hare.*

[d] *H. W. Beecher.*

15—17. (15) branch or rush, fig. of high class and low. "A total stagnation of business would be the result of the infatuated counsels of Egypt." (16) unto women, easily frightened; quite lacking manly spirit. the shaking, the attitude of threatening. (17) land of Judah, wh., being directly associated with Jehovah, will recall at once to the mind of Egypt their reasons for fearing His judgments.[a]

Infinite knowledge of God.—A little child sits on the verandah and watches the worm. He is a voyager for his food on the leaf of the mulberry tree, and he goes eating, eating, eating. Let us suppose that some Divine Power enables that worm to be so far intelligent as to say, "It is said that there are beings who can understand this whole tree; but it does not seem to me possible. I can comprehend how there might be beings that should understand this leaf, and the next three or four; but to take in all the million leaves on this tree is a thing that transcends my conception. I do not believe it possible for any magnified worm to understand so much." It is not possible for any worm. But there is a little Sunday-school child sitting on the verandah, who looks on the tree and sees the whole of it; and not only sees the whole of it, but can individualise the leaves at its pleasure. How easy it is for that little child to take in that whole tree! and how hard it is for that worm to take in more than three leaves! And let that child grow up, and be educated, and trained in landscape-gardening, and it will take in, not merely a tree, but a whole forest. If one leaf is coloured, if one twig is broken, if there is a dry branch, it does not escape his notice. Differences of hue, light, and shadow, the infinite diversities that come in forest life—he takes them all in, and has a kind of omnipresence in his consciousness of the facts of this whole matter. What could a worm understand or imagine of a being that is competent to take in the realm of philosophy, and that makes himself the measure of creation? He says, "It does not seem reasonable to me that anybody can understand more than twenty leaves. I cannot; and I do not see how anybody else can." And yet, do not you understand how a person can take in sections, and gradations, and ranks, and degrees infinitely above what a worm could understand? And have you anything more to do than to carry on that idea to imagine a Being before whom all eternity passes, and to whom all the infinite treasures of this eternity shall be just as simple as to you the leaves on the individual tree are? It only requires magnitude of being, infinity.[b]

18—20. (18) five cities, the sign of Judah getting hold of the Egy. land; perhaps by conquest, perhaps by the conversion of the inhabitants to Jehovah. Large numbers of Jews, in later years, became resident in Judæa. city of destruction, or of *Heres, i.e.* of the sun. "Called the city of overthrow bec. of the evidence it should present of the overthrow of heathenism."[a] (19) altar, *see* marg. note on previous *v.*[b] (20) saviour, prob. Alexander the Great, who delivered Eg. from the Persian yoke.

Homiletic hints.—I. No power political, numerical, intellectual, physical, able to resist God. II. Love your enemies. III. Be assured of reformation of wicked, before you receive them into intimate friendship. IV. Jesus found an asylum but not a home in Egypt; the world a lodge, not a rest for the Church. V. Conversion of this land predicted; do not despair of the salvation of

a This prophecy need not be fixed to any precise historical event. When in a helpless condition, Egypt would be full of fear at the least threatening of Jehovah, from whom they had already suffered so much.

"A philosopher asking one which of these two he had rather be,—Cræsus, one of the richest, but most vicious in the world; or Socrates, one of the poorest, but one of the most virtuous men in the world,—his answer was, that in his life he would be a Cræsus, but in his death a Socrates. So, if many in these days were put to their choice, they would be Dives in their life, but Lazarus in their death: they would, with Balaam, die the death of the righteous, but live the life of the wicked."—*Spencer.*

b H. W. Beecher.

a Spk. Com.

Corerdale renders this clause, "and Heliopolis shall be one of them."

b "A strange conception for one who wrote at a time when the old Egyp. priesthood seemed more powerful than ever!"—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 19—22. *J. Sortain, 74.*

the worst. VI. How mighty is the grace of God. He is able to save to the uttermost—even you.[c]

21, 22. (21) known, in the display of His power and grace. know the Lord, *i.e.* gratefully acknowledge His dealings with them. (22) sacrifice . . vow, indicating the acceptance of the Jewish ritual system.[a] smite, in judgment. heal, in mercy.[b]

Love of mercy.—It is related that during the first few days of the reign of Queen Victoria, then between nineteen and twenty years of age, some sentences of a court-martial were presented for her signature. One was death for desertion. A soldier was condemned to be shot; and his death-warrant was presented to the queen for her signature. She read it, paused, and looked up to the officer who had laid it before her, and said, "Have you nothing to say in behalf of this man?" "Nothing: he has deserted three times," said the officer. "Think again, my lord," was her reply. "And," said the gallant veteran as he related the circumstance to his friends (for it was none other than the Duke of Wellington), "seeing her Majesty so earnest about it, I said, 'He is certainly a bad soldier; but there was somebody who spoke to his good character: and he may be a good man for aught I know to the contrary.'" "Oh, thank you a thousand times!" exclaimed the youthful queen; and, hastily writing "Pardoned" in large letters on the fatal page, she sent it across the table with a hand trembling with eagerness and emotion.

23—25. (23) highway, open road, not blocked by hostile armies.[a] Assyria, Henderson thinks *Syria* is meant: the kingdom of the Seleucidæ. serve, the living God, as *v.* 21. (24) the third, one of three, forming a triple union in the service of God. Note the position of Israel as between Egypt and Syria. a blessing, as promised, Ge. xxii. 18. (25) my people, become Mine by their union in My worship. work . . hands, wh. has brought about their conversion. inheritance, so actual Son and Head of the entire earthly family of God.

The conversion of Jews and Gentiles (*vv.* 24, 25).—Consider—I. The event in which God expresses such delight: it is the conversion of the whole world to God; in this event God will greatly rejoice. II. The effect which the prospect of it should produce on us. It should prevail—1. To enlarge our philanthropy; 2. To raise our expectations; 3. To quicken our exertions.[b]

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

1, 2. (1) Tartan, *see* 2 Ki. xviii. 17. Sargon, king of Assyria immediately before Sennacherib. Ashdod,[a] prob. this town was taken in order to open the way to Egypt, and secure a defensive post on the line of the communications. (2) loose the sackcloth, this Is. seems to have worn as his ordinary garment.[b] barefoot, that he might represent the two captive nations, Egypt and Ethiopia, by his dress and gait.[c]

Genuine humility consists in a just sense entertained of ourselves, considered as creatures, compared with God. As repentance arises from the consideration of our sinfulness, compared with the holiness of God's law and nature, so humility springs from a just comparison of ourselves as creatures, with the self-

c Topics.

a "Lit. fulfilled when Ptolemy Energetes, after his victory over Seleucus, B.C. 244, came to Jerusalem, and 'offered many sacrifices and made many presents,' so that in his person Egypt did homage to the true God."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The intention of healing is prominent all through the smiting."—*Delitzsch.*

For doctrine of this *v.* comp. Job v. 17—19; Ho. v. 15, vi. 1, 2; Is. lvii. 15—19.

a A fig. for free, easy, peaceful communication.

"Cicero has said of men, 'They are like wines, age sours the bad and betters the good.' We can say that misfortune has the same effect upon them."—*Richter.*

b C. Simeon, M.A.

a One of the 5 principal cities of Philistia, Jos. xiii. 3; 1 Sa. vi. 17. Psammetichus spent 29 years in its siege, the longest siege recorded in history. Now an inconsiderable village, called *Esdud.*

existent, independent, and all-sufficient God. The essence, existence, and perfections of Jehovah are uncaused and absolute. He knoweth neither beginning nor end; neither variableness nor shadow of turning. He is before all and above all; therefore humility is no Divine virtue. But we are dependent upon Him in all respects: in essence, in existence, in active powers, and good qualities. Without Him we are as nothing, and can do nothing that is truly good. All our springs of sufficiency are in Him alone. He who thinks that he has any degree of goodness, physical or moral, in principle or in act, which is not immediately from God—who supposes that he has a power of preservation in any respect distinct from the operative Divine will—is in the same degree the subject of ignorance and pride. If we would disrobe ourselves of the worthless garment of pride, let us view the character of God, and compare it with our own. In that perfect mirror we may see that there is an infinite difference, and that God alone is distinctly good; and then "of less than nothing we may boast, and vanity confess." In that mirror we may see the true temper of the first perfect Adam; of the second Adam, who was meek and lowly of heart; and may behold the profound reverence and unutterable joy of the myriads of heaven.[d]

3, 4. (3) three years, better, for a three years' sign. We need not assume that the Prophet walked barefoot for three years. Three years were to elapse before the actual capture of the Egyptians. Prob. the time occupied in the siege of Ashdod. (4) lead away, *Heb.* lead the captivity, *i.e.* the captives. shame of Egypt, wh. made much of being properly clothed.[a]

Influence of dress.—I have no intention to argue against gold chains, velvet caps, or sables, or anything of this nature; but, granting this furniture may be somewhat of a guard to authority, yet no public person has any reason to value himself upon it; for the design of this sort of state is only to comply with the weakness of the multitude. It is an innocent stratagem to deceive them into their duty, and to awe them into a just sense of obedience. A great man will rather contemn this kind of finery, than think himself considerable by it. He will rather be sorry that his authority needs the support of so little an artifice, and depends, in any measure, upon the use of such trifles. To stoop to the vulgar notion of things, and establish one's reputation by counterfeit signs of worth, must be an uneasy task to a noble mind. Besides, we are not to think the magistrate cannot support his office without fine clothes; for, if he is furnished with general prudence, with abilities particular to his business, and has a competent share of power, he needs not doubt his influence over the people.[b]

5, 6. (5) they, *i.e.* God's people; who were so much disposed to trust to Egypt for help.[a] their glory, *i.e.* the subject of their boasting. (6) isle, marg. *country; i.e.* sea-coast, maritime country. how . . escape,[b] Egypt being reduced, no defence remained for Israel against the overwhelming power of Assyria.

Providential escapes.—Two brothers were walking together, when a violent storm of thunder and lightning overtook them. One was struck dead on the spot, the other was spared; else would the name of the great reformer, Martin Luther, have been unknown to mankind. By the siege of Leicester, a young soldier,

b "The Heb. Prophets wore a mantle, or cloak, of hair-cloth, as a badge of office, most prob. designed to indicate indifference to worldly refinement and indulgence."—*Henderson.*

c "What he did was only at variance with *custom* (in order to call attention to the sign), but not at all inconsistent with decency."—*Wordsworth.*

d Dr. E. Williams.

a "On the royal tombs at Thebes are representations of captives led away in triumph, either in a state of complete nudity, or with a small scarf suspended round their loins and hanging down the front."—*Henderson.*

"The vanity of loving fine clothes and new fashions, and valuing ourselves by them, is one of the most childish pieces of folly that can be."—*Sir M. Hale.*

b Jer. Collier.

a 2 Kings xix. 9.

b "This was the cry of despair at Jerusalem. But in such despair was her only hope. The destruction of Egypt and Ethiopia by the arms of Sennacherib weaned her from

looking any longer to earthly powers for help, and raised her eyes to heaven."—*Wordsworth.*

"Fashion—a word which knaves and fools may use, their knavery and folly to excuse."—*Churchill.*

about seventeen years of age, was drawn out for sentry duty. One of his comrades was very anxious to take his place. No objection was made, and this man went. He was shot dead while on guard. The young man first drawn afterwards became the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. John Wesley, when a child, was only just preserved from fire. Almost the moment after he was rescued, the roof of the house where he had been fell in. John Knox was always wont to sit at the head of the table with his back to the window. On one particular evening, without being able to account for it, he would neither himself sit in the chair, nor permit any one else to occupy his place. That very night, a bullet was shot in at the window purposely to kill him: it grazed the chair in which he usually sat, and made a hole in the foot of a candlestick on the table.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

1, 2. (1) **desert of the sea,** enigmatical description of Babylonia, as a great plain, flooded by the Euphrates.[a] **whirlwinds,** lit. *sweepers.* **south,** the great Arabian desert, in wh. quarter the most violent winds prevailed. **it cometh,** the judgment of God, by hostile armies. (2) **grievous,** hard, difficult to understand, and stern in character. **treacherous,** *etc.*, "the lawless oppressor, Asshur-Babel, continues his ravages." **go up,** *i.e.* against Babylon. **sighing,** *i.e.* of captive Israel. The conquest of Bab. by Cyrus secures deliverance for Israel.[b]

Prophecy must be fulfilled.—Two rabbis approaching Jerusalem observed a fox running upon the hill Zion. And Rabbi Joshua wept; but Rabbi Eliezer laughed. "Wherefore dost thou laugh?" said he who wept. "Nay, wherefore dost thou weep?" demanded Eliezer. "I weep," replied Rabbi Joshua, "because I see what is written fulfilled. Because of Mount Zion, which is desolate, the poor walk upon it." "And therefore," said Rabbi Eliezer, "do I laugh; for I have thereby a pledge that as God has fulfilled His threatenings to the very letter, so not one of His promises shall fail; for He is ever more ready to show mercy than judgment."

3, 4. (3) **loins . . pain,** the Prophet personifies afflicted Babylonia, and vividly represents her distress.[a] **bowed down,** the attitude taken for relief by those suffering acute pain.[b] (4) **heart panted,** or my mind wandered: "throbbed with perplexity." **night,** *etc.*, apparently here is prophetic reference to Belshazzar:[c] or the expression may be taken more simply for my resting time, the night when I might expect to be quiet. **fear,** trembling: restlessness and distress.

Fear of God.—The pagan nations have ever stood in awe of deities, whose wrath they have deprecated, but whose love they have never dared to hope for. In the East India Museum, in London, there is an elaborately-carved ivory idol, from India, with twelve hands, and in every hand a different instrument of cruelty. Papists put God far away, and trust to the intervention of priests, of saints, and of the Virgin. Prayers for a man must still go on after his death, and money be paid to buy God off from His vengeance. On the door of the Cathedral of St.

a "Babylonia, with its surging masses of people, was like a *sea desert*, a wilderness of peoples."—*Spk. Com.*

b The vision is given in 3 scenes: 1. Babylon in the height of its oppressions; 2. Media and Persia uniting for its overthrow; 3. Israel relieved by the Median success.

Elam, a part of Persia, is put for the whole.

a "The Proph. has lived in Bab. and with its people, until his lot seems bound up with theirs, and the first hearing of their suddenly approaching ruin fills him with dismay."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b "Too much confounded to hear, too much frightened to see."—*Ewald.*

c Comp. Da. v. 6.

"A good man regards the root. He fixes the root,

Nicholas, in Fribourg, Switzerland, I saw a notice requesting the prayers of the charitable for a youth who had died a few days before, "fortified by the sacraments of the church;" and, inside, a painting of sundry persons in the flames of purgatory, with a contribution-box underneath, and this inscription, "Oh! rescue us; you, at least, who are our friends."[d]

and all else flows out of it. The root is filia piety, the fruit brotherly love."—*Confucius.*

d C. D. Foss.

5, 6. (5) **prepare**, better, *they prepare.* This is what the Prophet sees in vision; the scenes connected with the destruction of Babylon.[a] See the narration in Da. v., comp. Je. li. 39, 57. **arise**, the call of the Proph., who sees the danger to which the feasting princes are so heedless. Represented as the night-cry of a watchman. **anoint the shield**, the usual custom before a fight. The shields were made of leather.[b] (6) **set a watchman**, this is the form the vision took. Isaiah gives the description as a watchman would report it.

a "The Proph. first hears the voice of the king of Babylon commanding the great annual feast to be prepared in honour of his god. All is safe; give yourselves up to mirth and feasting."—*Wordsworth.*

Offerings to weapons and instruments.—Strange as it may appear, the Hindoos make offerings to their weapons of war, and to those used in hunting. Fishermen offer incense to the bag in which they carry their fish, and to the net; and whilst the incense is burning, they hold the different implements in the smoke. The opulent sacrifice a sheep or a fowl, which is said to make the ceremony more acceptable to Varuna, the god of the sea. Should the tackle thus consecrated not prove successful, they conclude that some part of the ceremony has not been properly performed, and therefore must be repeated. But, in addition to this, they often call for their magicians to bless the waters, and to intercede for prosperity. Nor is this sacrificing to implements and weapons confined to fishermen, hunters, and warriors; for even artisans do the same to their tools; as also do students and scholars to their books. Thus, at the feast called *nara-ratere*, that is, "the nine nights," carpenters, masons, goldsmiths, weavers, and all other tradesmen, may be seen in the act of presenting offerings to their tools. Ask them a reason for their conduct, and they will say, "The incense and ceremonies are acceptable to Sarusa-pathi, the beautiful goddess of Brahma."[c]—*Anointing the shield.*—The ancient warrior did not yield to the moderns in keeping his armour in good order. The inspired writer often speaks of furbishing the spear, and making bright the arrows; and the manner in which he expresses himself in relation to this part of the soldier's duty, proves that it was generally and carefully performed. But they were particularly attentive to their shields, which they took care frequently to scour, polish, and anoint with oil. The Oriental soldier seems to have gloried in the dazzling lustre of his shield, which he so highly valued, and upon which he engraved his name and warlike exploits. To produce the desired brightness, and preserve it undiminished, he had recourse to frequent unction; which is the reason of the Prophet's invitation: "Arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield." As this was done to improve its polish and brightness, so it was covered with a case, when it was not in use, to preserve it from becoming rusty. This is the reason the Prophet says, "Kir uncovered the shield." The words of David, which we read in his lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, may refer to this practice of anointing the shield, rather than anointing the king: "The shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though it had not been anointed with oil:"

b "Commonly of bull's hide, with the hair outwards; sometimes strengthened by one or more rims of metal, and studded with nails or metal pins. It was oiled that the enemies' weapons might glide off it."—*Wilkinson.*

c Roberts.

"Dip the sea anemone into water warm enough to raise blisters on the skin, or expose it to the frost of winter, or place it under the exhausted bell of an air-pump, and its powerful vital principle will triumph over all these ordeals; cut off the tentacles, and new ones sprout forth; nay, cut the animal in two, and, like the lernæan or hydra, it will produce a reduplication of itself: it may be cruelly maimed by tooth or claw, and yet repair its losses, and survive."—*Hartwig*

d *Paxton.*

a *Mat. Arnold.*

"The war-chariots, the cavalry moving in double file, the trains of asses and camels, correspond to the appearance of the Perso-Median army."—*Spk. Com.*

b *J. A. Alexander.*

c "Cyrus had a great number of camels in his army, and his successor, Darius Hystaspis, is said to have gained a great victory over the Scythians by means of the number of asses in his service."—*See Herodotus.*

d The suddenness of the Median approach is vividly indicated by its coming in sight just as the watchman began to complain of his bootless watching.

e *Percy Anec.*

a "The strong antipathy of the Medes and Persians to image-worship is well known. Their iconoclasm is a thing to wh. the ancient world supplies no parallel outside Israel."—*Spk. Com.*

"The Persians deem it unlawful to form images, or construct temples and altars, and charge those with stupidity who do so."—*Herodotus.*

b "Under the fig. of a threshing-ground, and the *sons of a threshing-floor* (*i.e.* the corn threshed upon it), the Prophet

the word *he* being a supplement, the version now given is perfectly agreeable to the original text.[d]

7, 8. (7) asses, "Strabo mentions the use of asses by the mounted troops of certain Asiatic nations."[a] "Xenophon represents the Persians as advancing by two and two."[b] The asses and camels would be used to bear the baggage of the Medo-Persian army.[c] (8) a lion, better as marg., *he cried as a lion, i.e.* with an awakening voice. Complaining of his long and weary watching all in vain, for he sees nothing. But even while he thus complains, the army suddenly comes in sight.[d]

Lion hunt.—In a lion hunt at Baroda in the East Indies in 1816, a small party of the gentlemen of the residency, accompanied by ten sepoys, after killing a lioness, went in search of her companion. After some time, the animal was traced by his footsteps to one of the high hedges which intersected a garden within a mile of the town. The party approached within eight yards, when two gentlemen and two sepoys fired; the animal then moved off to the other side of the hedge, and ten minutes after he was discovered lying under another hedge, groaning with rage and pain. Some pieces were instantly discharged, which exasperating him, he rushed out, and nobly charged his assailants, his tail being curled over his back. In his advance he was saluted with great coolness with several balls from all the gentlemen and a few sepoys of the party who had come up; and though within a few yards of the object of his attack, he suddenly turned off and sprung upon a sepoy detached to the right, with whom he grappled, and afterwards by the violence of the exertion fell to the ground beyond him. At this moment the party gallantly, and for the humane purpose of saving a fellow creature, rushed forward, and with bayonets and swords put an end to the monster. The sepoy was wounded in the left shoulder, but not dangerously.[e]

9, 10. (9) a chariot, vanguard of a destroying host. The Prophet knows what it means, and raises the wail for Babylon fallen. images . . broken, Cyrus was an enemy to the Bab. idolatry.[a] (10) my threshing, the Prophet's countrymen, who had been *threshed, i.e.* oppressed, by their Bab. enemies.[b] In Bab. God was purifying His people, as corn is cleansed by threshing and winnowing.

Note on v. 9.—This is a prophecy, and yet speaks as if the event to which it relates had been already accomplished. In Jeremiah, also (li. 8), it is said, "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed." David says, "Thou hast smitten all mine enemies." Dr. A. Clarke says, "That is, Thou wilt smite!" He speaks in full confidence of God's interference, and knows that he shall as surely have the victory, as if he had it already. In these selections the past tense is used instead of the future. He who came from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, is made to say, "I will stain all my raiment." Dr. A. Clarke has, "And I have stained." In this instance, therefore, the future is used for the past. Ps. lxix: "Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not: and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out Thine indignation upon them, and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habita-

tion be desolate ; and let none dwell in their tents." Dr. Boothroyd renders these imprecations in the future, because he believes the whole to refer to judgments that should fall on the enemy. Dr. A. Clarke says: "The execrations here, and in the following verses, should be read in the future tense, because they are predictive, and not in the imperative mood, as if they were the offspring of the Psalmist's resentment." It is common in Eastern speech, in order to show the certainty of anything which shall be done, to speak of it as having been already accomplished. Thus the Psalmist, in speaking of the iniquities of bad men as having already received their reward, evidently alludes to the certainty of future punishment. It is therefore of the first importance to know in what tense the verb is meant, as that alone will give a true view of the intention of the writer. In the Tamul language the past tense is often elegantly used for the future : thus, in the *Nan-nool* (the Native Grammar) this distinction is beautifully illustrated. Does a note require to be taken to another place in a very short time, the messenger, on being charged not to loiter on the way, replies, "*Nan vanthu vuttain*," *i.e.* "I have already returned :" whereas he has not taken a single step of his journey. "My friend," asks the priest, "when do you intend to go to the sacred place and perform your vows?" "*Nan poye ran-thain*," *i.e.* "I have been and returned," which means he is going immediately. "Carpenter, if you are not quick in finishing that car, the gods will be angry with you." "My lord, the work is already done ;" when perhaps some months will have to elapse before the work can be finished. But they also use the past for the future, to denote certainty as well as speed. Do the ants begin to run about with their eggs in their mouth, it is said, "*Mally-pay-yattu*," "It has rained," though a single drop has not fallen on the ground. The meaning is, the sign is so certain, that all doubt is removed. "Why does that man go to the village? Does he not know the cholera is sweeping as a besom? Alas! alas! *avron-chetu ponān ;* he is already dead ;" which means, he will certainly die. Should the friends of a young man inquire whether he may go to sea, the soothsayer says (if the signs are unfavourable), "He is already drowned." But the future is also used instead of the past, as in the case of the deliverer from Bozrah : "I will stain," for "I have stained." Should a man refuse to obey an officer, and inquire, "Where is the order of the king?" the reply is, "He will command," which strongly intimates it has been done, and that other consequences will follow (1 Sam. iii. 13). See margin, 1 Kings iii. 13, also vi. 1, and xv. 25 ; 2 Kings viii. 16 ; Dan. ii. 28, also iii. 29 ; for all of which see marginal readings. See Dr. A. Clarke on Matt. iii. 17, also xxvi. 28, blood is shed, for will be shed.[c]

describes his own beaten, crushed, and pounded people."—*Mat. Arnold.*

Am. ix. 9; Mat. iii. 12; Re. xiv. 14, 15.

"Ordinarily, rivers run small at the beginning, grow broader and broader as they proceed, and become widest and deepest at the point where they enter the sea. It is such rivers that the Christian's life is like. But the life of the mere worldly man is like those rivers in Southern Africa, which, proceeding from mountain freshets, are broad and deep at the beginning, and grow narrower and more shallow as they advance. They waste themselves by soaking into the sands; and at last they die out entirely. The farther they run the less there is of them."—*Beecher.*

"Let us learn upon earth the things which can call us to heaven."—*Jerome.*

c *Roberts.*

11, 12. (11) **Dumah,** a mystical name, prob. for Edom. The word means, *silent land.* **Seir,** the principal mountain in Idumæa : S. of the Dead Sea, in Arabia Petræa. **what .. night?** *i.e.* how much of it is gone? Night is put for the season of national calamities. (12) **morning,** *i.e.* the return of joy and prosperity. **also the night,** *i.e.* new calamities are in the future. **return, come,** indicating that if they would know the future they must return with penitent and humble hearts to the Lord.[a]

Profane scoffers instructed (*vv.* 11, 12).—In this view of the

a "If ye seek for My help, and prove yourselves to be children of My faithful servant Abraham, then light will dawn upon you. Turn to Me with your whole heart, and I will receive you."—*S. Jerome.*

cr. 11, 12. *T. Adams*, i.; *Dr. Gill*, i. 16; *A. Fuller*, 514; *N. Hill*, 219; *Dr. J. Cumming, Voices of Night*, i. 40; *W. A. Butler*, ii. 342; *H. Blunt*, ii. 223.

b *C. Simeon, M.A.*

c *Stems and Twigs.*

Capt. Burke of Indiana, being mortally wounded, was asked, "How does it seem to you to be thus stricken down, with all your prospects and hopes cut short? Isn't it hard for you to give up life, and leave your family at your age?" "It has come suddenly upon me," was his reply; "but I feel prepared for it. I have lived close to my Saviour in the army, and tried to keep my accounts square every night." His wife went to nurse him. His mind sometimes wandered; but his wife could calm him by saying, "My dear, Jesus is here; and that is all you want." His assured reply was, "You are right, wife: that is all I want—all I want."

a "Region of thick underwood, rugged and inaccessible."—*Fausset.*

b See also Je. xxv. 23; Joh vi. 19.

c "The inhabitants of Tema are called to perform the rites of hospitality towards the fugitives."—*Henderson.*

prophecy we see—I. In what way men treat the Divine testimony. 1. With unbelieving indifference: 2 With contemptuous levity. II. In what way they should be treated. 1. Mark the Prophet's admonition: 2. His counsel. Apply:—(1) Be serious in your inquiries after the truth of God; (2) Be assured that God's word shall take effect: (3) Let the final issue of things be the great object of your concern.[b]—*The voices of Seir and Zion* (*cr.* 11, 12).—We have here—I. The taunt of sarcasm. 1. In all ages superciliousness and levity have characterised nations on the eve of destruction: 2. The preachers of God's Word have always been the butt of ridicule; 3. God's messages to the world have always met with contempt. II. The rejoinder of compassion. 1. He corrects the mistake their message implied: 2. He enforces the statement they had scorned; 3. He admonishes them to inquire the truth of his words; 4. He entreats them to abandon their hostile position; 5. He invites them to accept the offer of mercy.[c]

A curious custom.—The following used to be, and perhaps now is, the curious mode in which watchmen announce the hours of the night at Herrnhuth, in Germany:—

VIII. Past eight o'clock! O Herrnhuth do thou ponder;
Eight souls in Noah's ark were living yonder.
IX. 'Tis nine o'clock! ye brethren, hear it striking;
Keep hearts and houses clean, to our Saviour's liking.
X. Now, brethren, hear, the clock is ten and passing;
None rest but such as wait for Christ embracing.
XI. Eleven is past! still at this hour eleven.
The Lord is calling us from earth to heaven.
XII. Ye brethren, hear, the midnight clock is humming;
At midnight, our great Bridegroom will be coming.
I. Past one o'clock! The day breaks out of darkness:
Great Morning Star appear, and break our hardness!
II. 'Tis two! on Jesus wait this silent season,
Ye two so near related, will and reason.
III. The clock is three! The blessed Three doth merit
The best of praise, from body, soul, and spirit.
IV. 'Tis four o'clock! when three make supplication,
The Lord will be the fourth on that occasion.
V. Five is the clock! five virgins were discarded,
When five with wedding garments were rewarded.
VI. The clock is six! and I go off my station;
Now, brethren, *watch yourselves for your salvation.*

13—15. (13) **forest**,[a] instead of the open pastoral plains. The sign of their insecurity. **travelling companies**, wandering tribes. **Dedanim**, *see* Ge. xxv. 3; 1 Chr. i. 32. "They carried on commerce bet. Arabia and Tyre" (Eze. xxvii. 15). (14) **Tema**, Ge. xxv. 15; 1 Chr. i. 30.[b] **brought**, better, *bring ye*, the cry of distress from the tribes flying before the enemy. **prevented**, in the sense of coming to their help with gifts of bread.[c] (15) **grievousness**, *etc.*, or press of victorious battle.

Napoleon and the peasant boy.—When Napoleon returned to his palace, immediately after his defeat at Waterloo, he continued many hours without taking any refreshment. One of the grooms of the chamber ventured to serve up some coffee, in his cabinet,

by the hands of a child, whom Napoleon had occasionally distinguished by his notice. The emperor sat motionless, with his hands spread over his eyes. The page stood patiently before him, gazing with infantine curiosity on an image which presented so strong a contrast to his own figure of simplicity and peace; at last the little attendant presented his tray, exclaiming, in the familiarity of an age which knows so little distinctions, "Eat, sire; it will do you good." The emperor looked at him, and asked, "Do you not belong to Gonesse?" (a village near Paris). "No, sire, I come from Pierrefite." "Where your parents have a cottage and some acres of land?" "Yes, sire." "There is happiness," replied the man who was still the emperor of France and king of Italy.

16, 17. (16) **hireling**, *comp.* similar expression, ch. xvi. 14. **Kedar**,[a] Ge. xxv. 13. They ranged from the desert of the Red Sea as far as Euphrates. (17) **archers**, the Ishmaelites were famed for their archery.[b]

Bow and arrows.—Bow, Heb. *kesheth*, and arrows, *khitzim*. At first made of reed, branch of tree; afterwards longer, and of brass, or wood backed with horn, wholly of horn, or of ivory, shaped like English bow; or, especially by riding nations, like horns of buffalo. Used in hunting (Ge. xxvii. 3); in war (xlviii. 22: Isa. vii. 24); for shooting arrows (1 Ch xii. 2, marg.), called battle-bow (Zec. ix. 10, x. 4); used by bowmen (Jer. iv. 29). archers (1 S. xxxi. 3, marg.; Jer. li. 3); made sometimes of steel (2 S. xxii. 35; Job xx. 24); held in left hand (Ez. xxxix. 3); drawn with force (2 Ki. x. 24); used by Lydians (Jer. xlvi. 9); Elamites (xlix. 35); Philistines (1 S. xxxi. 2, 3); Benjamites (1 Ch. xii. 2; 2 Ch. xiv. 8); given as sign of friendship (1 S. xviii. 4); furnished by state (2 Ch. xxvi. 14); of conquered, destroyed (Ps. xxxvii. 15; Ezek. xxxix. 4). Arrows for long range, of reed, sometimes feathered, tipped with flint. For short range, wood, headed with metal; thirty inches long, with three feathers, like those now used.[c]

"As when several vessels of different sizes are cast into the sea, some receive more, and some less, yet all are full; so will it be among the saints of God in heaven; all, without exception, will be full of glory."—*Cawdray.*

a "All the Ishmaelites are called 'sons of Kedar' by the Hebrew rabbis."—*Wordsworth.*

b Ge. xxi. 20.

"Care is no cure, but rather a corrosive, for things that are not to be remedied."—*Shakespeare.*

"War ought never to be accepted unless it is offered by the hand of necessity."—*Sir P. Sidney.*

c Topics.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

1–3. (1) **valley of vision**, a poetical name for *Jerusalem*. Mr. Birks thinks it is for *Samaria*. **what aileth**, *etc.*, a question as of a stranger, who would know the reason of the prevailing excitement and distress. **housetops**,[a] evidently to watch the gathering of the hostile army to the siege. (2) **stirs**, better trans. "With crashing noises is she (now) filled,—the (once) boisterous city," etc.[b] **not . . sword**, as in open battle, but with famine, in the siege.[c] (3) **bound**, *i.e.* made prisoners in attempting to escape.

Housetops (v. 1).—The houses in the East were in ancient times as they are still, generally, built in one and the same uniform manner. The roof or top of the house is always flat, covered with broad stones, or a strong plaster of Paris, and guarded on every side with a low parapet-wall. The terrace is frequented as much as any part of the house. On this, as the season favours, they walk, they eat, they sleep, they transact business, they perform their devotions. The house is built with a court within, into which chiefly the windows open; those that open to the

a The flat roofs of Eastern houses are convenient for watchers.

b Spk. Com.

c For distress of sieges see 2 Ki. vi. 24, xviii. 9, 10.

"Thus sometimes hath the brightest day a cloud, and after summer evermore succeeds barren winter with his wrathful nipping cold; so cares and joys abound as seasons fleet."—*Shakespeare.*

"He is the happiest, he he king or peasant, who in is peace at home."—*Goethe.*

d Bp. Lowth.

a Comp. Je. ix. 1.

"Man is a child of sorrow, and this world, in wh. we breathe, has cares enough to plague us; but it hath means withal to soothe these cares; and he who meditates on others' woe shall in that meditation lose his own."—*Cumberland.*

"No words suffice the secret soul to show, and truth denies all eloquence to woe."—*Byron.*

street are so obstructed with lattice-work, that no one either without or within can see through them. Whenever, therefore, anything is to be seen or heard in the streets, every one immediately goes up to the housetop to satisfy his curiosity. In the same manner, when any one had occasion to make anything public, the readiest and most effectual way of doing it was to proclaim it from the housetops to the people in the streets.[d]

4, 5. (4) look away, and leave me to weep.[a] labour not, do not try the useless task. daughter . . people, as Je. iv. 11; La. ii. 11, iv. 3, 6, 10. (5) trouble, discomfiture. perplexity, Mi. vii. 4. crying, *etc., i.e.* crying so loud that the very mountains hear.

Anxiety versus trust.—One day, while Flattich, a pious minister of Wirtemberg, was sitting and meditating in his arm-chair, one of his foster-children fell out of a second-story window, right before him, down upon the pavement below. He calmly ordered his daughter to go down and pick up the child. On doing so, she found the child not only alive, but without having sustained the least injury. The noise occasioned thereby had called out a neighbour's wife, who reproached Flattich for his want of attention to his foster-children; for she had seen him quietly reposing in his arm-chair when the boy fell out of the window. While she was thus scolding, her own child, which she had brought along, fell from a bench in the room, and broke one of its arms. "Do you see, good woman?" said Flattich; "if you imagine yourself to be the sole guardian of your child, then you must constantly carry it on your arm. I commend my children to God; and, if they then fall, they fall into the arms of an angel."

6—9. (6) Elam[a] . . Kir, "Elam in the S.E., and Kir in the N.W., represent the limits of the Assyrian empire." uncovered the shield, wh. when not used had a protecting covering, or bag. (7) at the gate, close up to thy gates. (8) discovered, *etc.*, with reference to the defence-cities wh. the invading army secured on their way. armour . . forest, Solomon's cedar palace was subsequently converted into an arsenal.[b] (9) breaches, those occasioned by the neglect of previous governors, not those made by the enemy. waters . . pool, *comp.* Hezekiah's act.[c]

a "Elam here is treated as subject to Babylon: afterwards it was used by God as an instrument against it (Is. xxi. 2)."—*Wordsworth.*

b 1 Ki. vii. 2—7, x. 21.

c 2 Chr. xxxii. 4.

"A little girl was asked why she was working so very hard. She replied, 'My candle is almost burned out; and I have not got another.' Life is as a candle burning out. Sometimes there is a thief in it, a disease consuming it more quickly; or it may be blown out, suddenly extinguished; and we have not got

Note on v. 8.—The editor of the "Fragments" subjoined to Calmet's *Dictionary of the Bible*, thus renders and explains this passage: He rolled up, turned back, the covering of Judah, as the covering veils, hanging at the door of a house or tent, are rolled up, for more convenient passage, and did look, inspect carefully the arms and weapons of the house of the forest. The ideas contained in this interpretation are aptly expressed in the following extract from Frazer's *History of Kouli Khan:* "Nadir Shah, having taken Delhi, ordered Sirbullind Khan to attend the Towpchi Bashi, the master of the ordnance; and the Nissikchi Bachi, head regulator, commissary of seizures, who had each two hundred horse, to seize all the king's and the omra's ordnance, the treasury, jewels, *toishik-khanna* (the arsenal), and all the other implements and arms that belonged to the emperor, and the deceased omras: and to send to Mahommed Shah, the captive emperor, his son, Sultan Ahmed, and Malika al Zumani (the queen of the times), the empress. Nadir Shah took away the

ordnance, effects, and treasure." May not such conduct in a conqueror justify the allusion supposed to be intended in this representation of the Prophet; for what is this but rolling back what covered the privacy of the conquered state, and prying into the house of its armoury?[a]

10, 11. (10) broken . . fortify, removing exposed houses, and repairing the walls with the materials. They *numbered*, or examined, the houses, to see which could be best spared or used. (11) ditch, or pond, for storing water, when the springs outside the city were cut off. not . . maker, this is the prophetic reproach. The people had confidence in their own schemes and energy; they did not, in penitence and prayer, seek the help of their Divine King.[a]

God in His works.—While all things are of God, by God, and to God, and God is in all things, God is not all things, nor are all things God. This is Pantheism, and I wish to guard against this blunder of human philosophy. God is in His works as an author is in his book; as a builder is in his building; as a mechanic is in his mechanism, with this difference, God is the creator of the materials as well as the organiser and constructor of them in their multitudinous forms and relations. But whoever would affirm that the book was the author, or the author the book?—that the building was the builder, or the builder the building?—that the mechanism was the mechanic, or the mechanic the mechanism? Because God is said to be in nature, it does not therefore follow that God is nature, or nature God. The Creator must have existed before His creation, as an author must have existed before his book, the builder before his building, and the mechanic before his mechanism. In the completion of His works, God was no more absorbed in and confounded with them, than at the completion of any work of man the author or workman thereof is absorbed in and confounded with it, so that an observer should regard them as inseparable and undistinguishable. No: God maintains an existence distinct from nature, though in nature, as its Conserver; and were all material things annihilated, He would still have a being, as a man may, though all his works may be utterly destroyed.[b]

12—14. (12) call to weeping, this was really the message that was in the calamity, to wh. the people would give no heed. baldness, ch. xv. 2; Mi. i. 16. (13) joy, *etc.*, the excitement of false security.[a] eat . . die, *see* 1 Cor. xv. 32.[b] (14) till ye die, Divine response to their self-confident boastings. Reference is to the utter death, or desolation, of the city and the nation. Reference to the second death is not necessary.

Cyrus a gardener.—When Lysander, the Lacedæmonian general, brought magnificent presents to Cyrus, the younger son of Darius, who piqued himself more on his integrity and politeness than on his rank and birth, the prince conducted his illustrious guest through his gardens, and pointed out to him their varied beauties. Lysander, struck with so fine a prospect, praised the manner in which the grounds were laid out, the neatness of the walks, the abundance of fruits, planted with an art which knew how to combine the useful with the agreeable, the beauty of the parterres, and the glowing variety of flowers, exhaling odours universally throughout the delightful scene. "Everything charms and

another." — *Dr. Wise.*

d Burder.

a "They did not depend upon God for a blessing upon their endeavours, saw no need for it, and therefore sought not to Him for it, but thought their own powers and policies sufficient for them." —*Mat. Henry.*

"Live to-day'" was the morning salutation of John Wesley to Sophia Cook, a young lady who lived in his house. The words made her more earnest, and resulted in the founding of Sunday schools. Miss Cook first suggested them to Mr. Raikes, saying of the children, "Let us teach them to read, and take them to church;" and was associated with him in the carrying out of the plan.

b J. Bate.

a "Nothing more strikingly evinces the strength of human depravity than trifling and reckless bravery when men are on the brink of destruction." — *Henderson.*

b Comp. Lu. xvii. 26—30.

"It has been disputed whether these words are expressive of contemptuous incredulity, or of a desperate determination to spend

the residue of life in pleasure."—*J. A. Alexander.*

vv. 12–14. *J. Alting, Op.* ii. pars. 4. 57; *Dr. J. Burton*, i. 161; *S. Davies*, iii. 215; *R. Walker*, iv. 110.

c Cheever.

"The things for which I hold life valuable, are the satisfactions which accrue from the improvement of knowledge, and the exercise of piety."—*Boyle.*

transports me in this place," said Lysander to Cyrus; "but what strikes me most is the exquisite taste and elegant industry of the person who drew the plan of these gardens, and gave it the fine order, wonderful disposition, and happiness of arrangement which I cannot sufficiently admire." Cyrus replied, "It was I that drew the plan and entirely marked it out; and many of the trees which you see were planted by my own hands." "What!" exclaimed Lysander, with surprise, and viewing Cyrus from head to foot, "is it possible that, with those purple robes and splendid vestments, those strings of jewels and bracelets of gold, those buskins so richly embroidered; is it possible that you could play the gardener, and employ your royal hands in planting trees?" "Does that surprise you?" said Cyrus; "I assure you that, when my health permits, I never sit down to my table without having fatigued myself, either in military exercise, rural labour, or some other toilsome employment, to which I apply myself with pleasure." Lysander, still more amazed, pressed Cyrus by the hand, and said, "You are truly happy, and deserve your high fortune, since you unite it with virtue."[c]

a Spk. Com.

The foreign form of the name Shebna indicates that this officer was an alien, and prob. a heathen.

b "The Prophet upbraids him with making provision for himself and his posterity in a land to wh. he was an alien, and from wh. he was so soon to be expelled."—*J. A. Alexander.*

It is lamentable that we should live so long in the world and do so little for God; and that we should live so short a time in the world, and do so much for Satan.

"A tomb is a monument placed on the limits of two worlds."—*St. Pierre.*

c Carne's Letters fr. the East.

15, 16. (15) Shebna, steward of the royal house, who was prob. the leader of the sensual indulgence and impiety. "The messenger was to confront Shebna, and give the message to his face."[a] (16) whom, *i.e.* as a source of defence. hewed, *etc.*, a sign that he felt perfectly sure of dying in his bed, and having an honoured funeral. "His only idea of immortality being posthumous glory," in having a grand mausoleum.[b]

Tombs of the kings.—"Returning to Thebes, we set out early in the morning on a visit to the tombs of the kings. They are situated in a kind of amphitheatre, formed by naked and pointed summits of the mountains. In the middle of this is a steep descent or chasm, and at its bottom are the entrances of these abodes of the dead. Descending a flight of steps, the door of the largest tomb was opened, and the passage, by a slight descent, conducted into the various chambers. The chambers are fourteen in number, hewn out of the solid rock; and the walls and ceilings are covered with bas-reliefs, in the highest state of perfection, which is owing partly to their having been carefully preserved from injury, and from the external air. The painting looks as fresh as if laid on but a few years ago. The figures, finely and deeply cut in the rock, are of various colours, some of a light and deep blue, yellow, or red, with a mixture of white; they are in some parts diminutive; in others, three or four feet in height. These groups of figures represent sometimes the progress of the arts, or the productions of agriculture: in one part you see a long religious procession; in another, a monarch sitting on his throne, dressed in his splendid attire, and giving audience to his subjects: or a spectacle of death, where a corpse is laid out on the bier attended by mourners. Various animals also, as large as life, and a number of serpents, the different hues and folds of the body of which are beautifully executed, in particular one of a large size of the boa constrictor. In some of the chambers the sculptures on the walls and ceilings are only partially executed, the work being evidently left in an unfinished state."[c]

17–19. (17) carry thee away, with the hurling of a strong

man. Fling thee away as a worthless thing. **cover thee,** "wrapping, will wrap thee up, and fling thee like a ball." (18) **large country,** lit. *land wide of hands.* The extensive country of Abyssinia. **chariots,** which the enemy shall carry away. The sight of them shall annoy thee in the captive land. (19) **station,** as the highest officer of the court.

Note on v. 17.—To be covered is a sign of mourning, of degradation, and inferiority. People in great sorrow cover their faces with their robes; thus may be seen the weeping mother and sorrow-struck father: they cover themselves from the sight of others, to conceal their dejection and tears. But when people are ashamed, also, they cover their heads and faces. For a man to say he will cover another, intimates superiority, and shows that he will put him to confusion. "Yes, the man who was brought up and nourished by the Modeliar, is now greater than his benefactor, for he covers him." "Look at that parasitical banyan tree; when it first began to grow on the other tree, it was a very small plant, but it has been allowed to flourish, and now it covers the parent stock." Thus, those who were to be carried into captivity, were to be covered, in token of their sorrow, degradation, and inferiority.[a]

20–23. (20) **Eliakim,** Hezekiah's minister. (21) **robe,** the sign of office. **a father,**[a] not a tyrant, as Shebna in his egotism and pride had been. Father intimates that he would be to the people protector, counsellor, and friend. (22) **key .. shoulder,** the keys of the E. being often large, are carried hanging from a kerchief over the shoulder.[b] The key was the emblem of office, as indeed it is still. "Among the Greeks the key was worn as a badge of sacerdotal dignity." **open .. shut,** Re. iii. 7. (23) **nail,** or tent-peg that secures the ropes of the tent.[c] **throne .. house,** *i.e.* would be a great support to his family and kindred, by securing them office and honour.

A nail in a sure place (*v.* 23).—I. The lesson of the nail: little things may be very important things. II. The lesson of the sure place. 1. Good words, in order that they may do good, need good memories, and the good memory is the sure place; 2. A good example in a fruitful life, is a "nail in a sure place;" 3. Faith fixed on a good object, is "a nail in a sure place." III. The lesson of the fastening. 1. In order to the fastening, a nail needs guiding; 2. Fastened: some things, once fixed, are fixed for ever; 3. In a good place fastened.[d]

The key of the house of David.—The most ancient lock ever discovered is that described by Mr. Bonomi as having secured the gate of an apartment in one of the palaces of Khorsabad. He says, "At the end of the chamber, just behind the first halls, was formerly a strong gate of one leaf, which was fastened by a large wooden lock, like those still used in the East, of which the key is as much as a man can conveniently carry, and by a bar which moved into a square hole in the wall. It is to a key of this description that the Prophet probably alludes: 'And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder" (Isa. xxii. 22), and it is remarkable that the word for key (*muftah*) in this passage of Scripture is the same in use all over the East at the present time." —*The key of David.*—The allusion here made is at once explained by the fact that it is the custom in the East for people to carry their key on their shoulder. The handle is generally made

"Think of 'living'! Thy life, wert thou the 'pitifullest of all the sons of earth,' is no idle dream, but a solemn reality. It is thy own; it is all thou hast to front eternity with. Work, then, like a star, unhasting, yet unresting."—*Carlyle.*

a Roberts.

a Job xxix. 16.

b Fausset.

Is. ix. 6, 7.

c Ezr. iv. 8.

Here poss. rather the peg on wh. things are hung in the house. A strong peg on wh. reliance can be placed.

d "H." in *Preacher's Lantern.*

"A monarch's crown, golden in show, is but a crown of thorns, brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights, to him who wears the regal diadem, when on his shoulder each man's burthen lies: for therein lies the office of a king,—his honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,—that for the public all its weight he bears."—*Milton.*

e Metal Trades' Advertiser.

of brass, though sometimes of silver, and is often nicely worked in a device of filigree. The corner of a handkerchief is tied to the ring, the key is then placed on the shoulder, and the handkerchief hangs down in front. At other times, they have a bunch of large keys, and then they have half on one side of the shoulder, and half on the other. For a man thus to march along with a large key on his shoulder shows at once that he is a person of consequence. Hence the expressions—"Raman is in great favour with the Modeliar, for he now carries the key." "Whose key have you got on your shoulder?" "The key of the house of David was to be on the shoulder of Eliakim, who was a type of Him who had "the government upon His shoulder; the Messiah, the Prince of peace."*f*

24, 25. (24) **hang**, *etc.*, the fig. of the peg, with the various family utensils hung on it, is here drawn out. Even the lowliest members of the family were to gain security and honour by Eliakim's elevation. **vessels of flagons**, prob. bottles or pitchers. (25) **is fastened**, at the time the prophecy was given. The reference is to Shebna. **cut down**, the term generally used for cutting down a tree, so appropriate to the chopping off of his peg.

Note on v. 25.—The Orientals, in fitting up their houses, were by no means inattentive to the comfort and satisfaction arising from order and method. Their furniture was scanty and plain; but they were careful to arrange the few household utensils they needed so as not to encumber the apartments to which they belonged. Their devices for this purpose, which, like every part of the structure, bore the character of remarkable simplicity, may not correspond with our ideas of neatness and propriety, but they accorded with their taste, and sufficiently answered their design. One of these consisted in a set of spikes, nails, or large pegs, fixed in the walls of the house, upon which they hung up the movables and utensils in common use that belonged to the room. These nails they do not drive into the walls with a hammer or mallet, but fix them there when the house is building; for if the walls are of brick they are too hard, or if they consist of clay, too soft and mouldering, to admit the action of the hammer. The spikes, which are so contrived as to strengthen the walls, by binding the parts together, as well as to serve for convenience, are large, with square heads like dice, and bent at the ends so as to make them cramp-irons. They commonly place them at the windows and doors, in order to hang upon them, when they choose, veils and curtains, although they place them in other parts of the room, to hang up other things of various kinds. The care with which they fixed these nails, may be inferred as well from the important purposes they were meant to serve, as from the promise of the Lord to Eliakim: "And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place." Pins and nails, Dr. Russel observes, in a manuscript note, are seldom used (at Aleppo) for hanging clothes or other articles upon, which are usually laid one over the other, on a chest, or particular kind of chair. This intelligent writer does not refuse that they are occasionally used in modern times; and it is evident from the words of the Prophet, that it was common in his time to suspend upon them the utensils belonging to the apartment: "Will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?" The word used in Isaiah for a nail of this sort is the

f Roberts.

"Minute events are the hinges on which magnificent results turn. In a watch, the smallest link-chain or ratchet, cog or crank, is as essential as the mainspring itself. If one fall out, the whole will stand still." —*Dr. Cumming.*

v. 24. *E. Erskine*, vii. 599.

"When a man in power has given a situation to another, it is said of the favoured individual, 'He is fastened as a nail.' 'Yes, his situation is fixed, he will not be moved.' 'What has Tamban lost his glory? I thought he had been fastened as a nail.'"—*Roberts.*

"All the virtues of domestic life are lessons which are taught in the Christian school. It is like the sun, who, though he regulates and leads on the year, dispensing life and light to all the planetary worlds, yet disdains not to cherish and beautify the flower which opens its bosom to his beam; so the Christian religion, though chiefly intended to teach us the knowledge of salvation, and be our guide to happiness on high, yet also regulates our conversation in the world, extends its benign influence to every circle of society, and peculiarly

same which denotes the stake, or large pin of iron, which fastened down to the ground the cords of their tents. These nails, therefore, were of necessary and common use, and of no small importance in all their apartments; and if they seem to us mean and insignificant, it is because they are unknown to us, and inconsistent with our notions of propriety, and because we have no name for them but what conveys to our ear a low and contemptible idea. It is evident from the frequent allusions in Scripture to these instruments, that they were not regarded with contempt or indifference by the natives of Palestine. "Grace has been showed from the Lord our God," said Ezra, "to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in His holy place;" or, as explained in the margin, a constant and sure abode. The dignity and propriety of the metaphor appears from the use which the prophet Zechariah makes of it: "Out of Him cometh forth the corner, out of Him the nail, out of Him the battle bow, out of Him every oppressor together." The whole frame of government, both in Church and State, which the chosen people of God enjoyed, was the contrivance of His wisdom, and the gift of His bounty: the foundations upon which it rested; the bonds which kept the several parts together; its means of defence; its officers and executors, were all the fruits of distinguishing goodness; even the oppressors of His people were a rod of correction in the hand of Jehovah, to convince them of sin, and restore them to His service.[a]

diffuseth its blessed fruits in the paths of domestic life."—*Hogg.*

"As the rose-tree is composed of the sweetest flowers and the sharpest thorns; as the heavens are sometimes fair and sometimes overcast, alternately tempestuous and serene; so is the life of man intermingled with hopes and fears, with joys and sorrows, with pleasures and with pains."—*Burton.*

a Paxton.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

1. Tyre, successor to Sidon, as the great commercial city of the world.[a] Situated partly on a rocky island near the coast of Phœnicia, and partly in a wide and fertile plain upon the coast itself. **Tarshish,** prob. *Tartessus* in Spain,[b] the farthest point of their voyages, or the chief centre of the produce they carried. Comp. our term for big merchant-ships, *East Indiamen.* This message is given to inward-bound ships, which will find their port destroyed when they arrive. **land of Chittim,** *i.e.* "the islands and maritime regions on the northern shores of the Mediterranean." At some of these the returning ships may call, and get the sad news.

Tyre.—Few of the cities of the past were, in their way, more flourishing and wealthy than the celebrated Tyre. The Hebrew Prophets, being commanded to foretell its overthrow, on account of the wickedness of the inhabitants, delivered their predictions with great minuteness and circumstantiality (see Isa. xxiii.: Jer. xxv.; Ezek. xxvi.—xxviii.: Amos i. 9, 10; Zech. ix. 1—8; Joel iii. 4—8). That these predictions have been literally accomplished, let the present state of this once famous city bear witness. Concerning that state, Dr. Thomson thus writes: "It (an insignificant village) is all that remains of her. But weep not for Tyre; this very silence and repose are most eloquent and emphatic on themes of the last importance to the Christian faith. There is nothing here of that which led Joshua to call it 'the strong city,' more than three thousand years ago (Josh. xix. 29); nothing of that mighty metropolis which baffled the proud Nebuchadnezzar and all his power for thirteen years, until every head in

a "Tyre sustained 3 sieges by Asiatic powers, the first by Shalmanezer, in the reign of Hezekiah, B.C. 717; the second by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 573; and the third by Alexander the Great, B.C. 332."—*Henderson.*

b Eze. xxvii. 12, 25.

Here is a good searching question for a man to ask himself as he reviews his past life—*Have I written in the snow?* Will my life-work endure the lapse of years and the fret of change? Has there been anything immortal in it, which will survive the speedy wreck of all sublunary things? The

boys inscribe their names in capitals in the snow, and in the morning's thaw the writing disappears; will it be so with my work, or will the characters which I have carved outlast the brazen tablets of history? *Have I written in the snow?*

"Our reverence for the past is just in proportion to our ignorance of it."—*T. Parker.*

c J. C. Gray in *Bible Lore.*

his army was bald, and every shoulder peeled in the hard service against Tyrus (Ezek. xxix. 18); nothing in this wretched roadstead and empty markets to remind one of the times when merry mariners did sing in her markets; no visible trace of those towering ramparts which so long resisted the utmost efforts of the great Alexander; all have vanished like a troubled dream. But the Christian would not have it otherwise. The very veracity of Jehovah stands pledged, or seems to be, to keep it so (Ez k. xxvi. 3—5). As she now is, and has long been, Tyre is God's witness; but, great, powerful, and populous, she would be the infidel's boast. This, however, she cannot, will not be. Tyre will never rise from her dust to falsify the voice of prophecy. Nor can I make any lamentation for her: she is a greater blessing to the world now, than in the day of her highest prosperity." The entire overthrow of this famous city recalls the lines of Howitt:—

> "Ere long came on a traveller, slowly paced;
> Now east, now west, he turned with curious eye,
> Like one perplexed with an uncertainty.
> Awhile he looked upon the sea, and then
> Upon a book, as if it might supply
> The thing he lacked; he read, and gazed again;
> Yet, as if unbelief so on him wrought,
> He might not deem that shore the shore he sought."

2, 3. (2) **be still,** or dumb with terror. **isle,** *i.e.* the inhabitants of insular Tyre. **Zidon,** the older city, from wh. Tyre was colonised, and the daughter became a more wealthy and important city than the mother. (3) **seed of Sihor,**[a] better, "on the great waters was the produce of Sihor." The harvests of the Nile were carried to all lands by Tyrian ships, and the Tyrian revenue largely came from this carrying trade. **mart of nations,** Egyptian corn being first warehoused at Tyre, and thence conveyed to ports on the Mediterranean.

[a] "The produce of the Nile, called Sihor, or the Black River."—*Wordsworth.*

"Though Egypt abounded in grain, yet the inhabitants left its exportation to foreigners."—*Henderson.*

Geology of rivers.—Streams and rivers—in fact, all water currents—act chiefly in a mechanical way, and their influence depends partly on the nature of the rocks over which they run, the rapidity of their flow, and the size or volume of water. If the rocks over which they pass be of a soft or friable nature, they soon cut out channels, and transport the eroded material in the state of mud, sand, or gravel, to the lower level of some lake, to their estuaries, or to the bed of the ocean. Their cutting as well as transporting power is greatly aided by the rapidity of their currents; hence the power of mountain torrents compared with the quiet and sluggish flow of the lowland river. It has been calculated, for example, that a velocity of three inches per second will tear up fine clay, that six inches will lift fine sand, eight inches sand coarse as linseed, and twelve inches fine gravel; while it requires a velocity of twenty-four inches per second to roll along rounded pebbles an inch in diameter, and thirty-six inches per second to sweep angular stones of the size of a hen's egg. During periodical rains and land floods, the currents of rivers often greatly exceed this velocity: hence the tearing up of old deposits of gravel, the sweeping away of bridges, and the transport of blocks many tons in weight—an operation greatly facilitated by the fact that stones of ordinary specific gravity

v. 3. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 591.

"Peter the First, King of Portugal, to restrain luxury, and prevent the ruin of families, absolutely forbade all his subjects to buy or sell any of their commodities without immediate payment, and made the commission of that offence death!"—*Percy Anec.*

(from 2·5 to 2·8) lose more than a third of their weight by being immersed in water.[b]

4, 5. (4) the sea, put for Tyre, the city in the sea: the fortress, or stronghold in the sea. I travail not, "After all her pains and care, she is left childless. The family wh. she had reared, and advanced to high dignity, has perished."[a] (5) as . . Egypt, or when the report of Tyre's fall comes to Egypt, it shall be sorely distressed, and fear for its own safety.[b]

The voice of the sea (*v.* 4).—It speaks—I. Of the greatness and goodness of God. II. Of the vastness and grandeur of the forces of nature. III. Of the ingenuity of man. IV. Of the dangers of those who sail upon it. V. Of our duty to those who sail upon it.[c]

Dangers of the sea.—Nathaniel, an assistant to the Moravian missionaries in Greenland, when engaged in the seal fishery, being in company with another brother, who was yet inexperienced in the management of a kayak (a Greenland boat), met a Neitsersoak, the largest kind of seal, which he killed. He then discovered his companion upon a flake of ice, endeavouring to kill another of the same species, and in danger; he therefore left his dead seal, kept buoyant by the bladder, and hastened to help his brother. They succeeded in killing the seal; but suddenly a strong north wind arose, and carried off both the kayaks to sea; nor could they discover any kayaks in the neighbourhood. They cried aloud for help, but in vain. Meanwhile the wind rose in strength, and carried both the kayaks, and also the piece of ice, swiftly along with the waves. Having lost sight of the kayaks, they now saw themselves without the least hope of deliverance. Nathaniel continued praying to his Saviour, and thought with great grief of the situation of his poor family, but felt a small degree of hope arising in his breast. Unexpectedly, he saw his dead seal floating towards him, and was exceedingly surprised at its approaching against the wind, till it came so near the flake of ice that they could secure it. But how should a dead seal become the means of their deliverance? and what was now to be done? All at once, Nathaniel resolved, at a venture, to seat himself upon the dead floating seal; and by the help of his paddle, which he had happily kept in his hand when he joined his brother on the ice, to go in quest of the kayaks. Though the sea and waves continually overflowed him, yet he kept his seat, made after the kayaks, and succeeded in overtaking his own, into which he crept, and went in quest of that of his companion, which he likewise found. He also kept possession of the seal; and now hastened in search of the flake of ice, on which his companion was most anxiously looking out for him; having reached it, he brought him his kayak, and enabled him to secure the other seal, when both returned home in safety. When relating his dangerous adventure, he ascribed his preservation not to his own contrivance, but to the mercy of God alone.[d]

6, 7. (6) to Tarshish, *see v.* 1. (7) joyous city, ch. xxii. 2. Being a prosperous city it was full of feastings and pleasure-seekings. antiquity, "the Tyrian priests asserted that their temple had been built 2,300 years previously."[a] own feet, poetical reference to the flight of the inhabitants in their own ships.[e]

b David Page.

a Spk. Com.

"Tyre bewails her childlessness by reason of her captivity."—*Wordsworth.*

b See Eze. xxix. 18, 19.

v. 5. *Dr. W. Worthington. Boyle Lec.* i. 376.

c G. Brooks.

"1. There is a river—of Gospel truth—whose streams—promises, warnings, mercy, love, etc.—make glad the city—Church—of God; this will cleanse—sanctify them through Thy truth,—while more imposing rivers—form, ceremony, ritualistic observances—fail to touch the soul. 2. Have we proudly preferred the rivers of earth before the waters of life? 3. It is our duty, whatever appearances and our wishes, to believe that God's way is best."—*Topics.*

"Praise the sea, but keep on land."—*G. Herbert.*

d Whitecross.

a Herodotus. "It is a city remarkable to posterity, both for the antiquity of its origin and for its frequent change of for-

tune." — *Quintus Curtius.*

b "When the Tyrians saw that the works for carrying on the siege were perfected, and the foundations of the walls were shaken by the battering of the rams, whatsoever precious things in gold, silver, clothes, and various kinds of furniture the nobility had, they put them on board their ships and carried to the islands, so that, the city being taken, Nebuchadnezzar found nothing worthy of his labour."—*S. Jerome.*

c Topics.

a "To show the vanity of their efforts to deify themselves."—*Spk. Com.*

Eze. xxvii. 3, describes their luxury even in their shipping. See also Eze. xxviii. 2, etc.

r. 8. *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 62.

a "Some take this as indicating the rude and unlettered condition of the Chaldæans previous to their settlement in Babylonia."—*Henderson.*

"A Norwegian reproaching a Dutchman with luxury — 'What is become,' said he, 'of those happy times, when a merchant on going from Amsterdam to

Notes on Tarshish.—Historical (Tarshish): said to have been peopled by Tarshish, south of Javan (Gen x. 4, 5: 1 Ch. i. 7); merchants of (Ez. xxxviii. 13); silver brought from (Jer. x 9); ships of (Ps. xlviii. 7; Is. ii. 16); Solomon brought gold from (?) (1 K. x. 22; 2 Ch. ix. 21); Jehoshaphat's ships of Tarshish made at Ezion-geber, on the Red Sea, to go to Ophir (1 K. xxii. 48, with 2 Ch. xx. 36); commerce of Tyre with Tarshish (Is. xxiii. 1—14; Ez xxvii. 12); Jonah attempts to flee to (Jonah i. 3, iv. 2); prophecies of (Ps. lxxii. 10: Is. lx. 9, lxvi. 19). Geographical.—1. Situation (Tarshish): prob. Tartessus, "a city and emporium of the Phœnicians in south of Spain." Proof—1. Similarity of name. Tartessus = Tarshish in Aramaic form (Bochart). 2. The connection between Tarshish and Tyre, as once between Tartessus and Phœnicians. "Tartessus was founded by the Phœnicians (Arian). 3. The articles supplied by Tarshish are precisely those known to have been obtained from Spain (Ez. xxvii. 12). "Ships of Tarshish" is a term denoting a certain class of vessel, *i.e.* those fitted for long voyages, as "East Indiaman" was a name for ships, some of which might never go to the East Indies (D. B. N. S. ii. 281). Ships trading to Tarshish (Tartessum) usually sailed from Joppa (Jonah i. 3, iv. 2). But a navy of Tarshish—*i.e.* of large trading vessels—also sailed once in three years to other regions from the Red Sea (1 K. ix. 26, x. 22).*c*

8—12. (8) **crowning city**, *i.e.* wh. conferred kingly and princely dignities on leading citizens of her many colonies. Or the meaning may be *crowned city*, sitting so grandly on her island-throne. **traffickers**, or traders. (9) **Lord of Hosts**, the real Lord even of idolatrous Phœnicia. **stain**, or pollute. Show that no true honour can belong to any nation apart from the fear and service in righteousness of the one living God. Man's pride against God must everywhere be humbled.*a* (10) **as a river**, *i.e.* as the flooding Nile. Figurative references may be to the sudden rushing of the people towards the sea, as a river in flood rushes. **strength**, or defensive fortifications. (11) **he**, that is, Jehovah, by His agent Asshur. (12) **oppressed**, *etc.*, or thou "outraged virgin-daughter." **Chittim**, *v.* 1.

Note on Chittim.—(Chittim) Cyprians, by some thought = to Hittites. Cyprians were a race descended from Javan, of family of Japheth (Gen. x. 4; 1 Ch. i. 7. Kittim). Phœnicians traded with Cyprus; one of their settlements there being Citium, on south-east coast. People of Citium = Kittæi of the Greeks. The name given to this settlement, spread over the whole island, and to the people who after occupied settlements which had been Phœnician. Hence Chittim = many islands and coasts of the Mediterranean (Nu. xxiv. 24; Is. xxiii. 11, 12: Jer. ii. 10: Ez. xxvii. 6; Dan. xi. 30), and is connected with Greece by race, and with Phœnicia by locality.

13, 14. (13) **behold**, this verse reverts to the fact that Babylon, wh. was agent of the destruction of Tyre, should presently be itself destroyed. **was not**, better, *is not*. The Prophet sees it destroyed. **dwell . . wilderness**, *i.e.* for the beasts of the desert. This would be the issue of all its founder's ambitious schemes.*a* **he brought**, *i.e.* God, discomfiting their schemes of universal empire. (14) **strength**, or stronghold.

Fluctuation of trade.—Trade is a fluctuating thing: it passed from Tyre to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Venice, from Venice to Antwerp, from Antwerp to Amsterdam and London, the English rivalling the Dutch; the French are now rivalling both. All nations, almost, are wisely applying themselves to trade, and it behoves those who are in possession of it to take the greatest care that they do not lose it. It is a plant of tender growth, it requires sun and soil and fine seasons to make it thrive and flourish. It will not grow like the palm tree, which, with the more weight and pressure, rises the more. Liberty is a friend to that, as that is a friend to liberty. But the greatest enemy to both is licentiousness, which tramples upon all law and lawful authority, encourages riots and tumults, promotes drunkenness and debauchery, sticks at nothing to support its extravagance, practises every art of illicit gain, ruins credit, ruins trade, and will in the end ruin liberty itself. Neither kingdoms nor commonwealths, neither public companies nor private persons, can long carry on a beneficial and flourishing trade without virtue, and what virtue teacheth—sobriety, industry, frugality, modesty, honesty, punctuality, humanity, charity, the love of our country, and the fear of God.[b]

15, 16. (15) forgotten, *i.e.* put into obscurity and comparative poverty. one king, better, one dynasty.[a] as an harlot, or wandering one. (16) mayest be remembered, she was to set herself to win back her former prosperities, attracting to herself again the lost merchandise.

Dignity of trade.—Among the ancients, commerce did not appear unworthy the application of persons of the first rank. Solomon, we are told, frequently joined his merchant fleets with those of the king of Tyre, for their voyage to Ophir; and by this means, though in a little kingdom, he rendered himself the richest monarch of his time. Among the Romans, commerce was considered dishonourable, and those who engaged in it were held in contempt. This is still the case in some parts of Germany, where some of the paltry nobles, whose whole income is not equal to that of a tradesman's clerk in London, will not be seen in the same room with any person engaged in trade, or with one descended from a merchant. In France, the nobles are allowed to exercise commerce without derogating from their nobility: by an ordinance of Louis XIII., merchants are allowed to take on them the quality of nobles; and by another of Louis XIV., they are declared capable of being secretaries of state, without laying aside their commerce. In our own country, in the tenth century, King Athelstan passed a remarkable law, which was well calculated for the encouragement of commerce, and which it required some liberality of mind, in that age, to devise, namely, that a merchant who had made three long sea-voyages on his own account should be admitted to the rank of a thane or gentleman. It may be added, for the honour of trade, that some of the Italian princes, looking on themselves as the chief merchants of their states, do not disdain to make their own palaces serve as magazines; and there are several kings in Asia, as well as most of those on the coasts of Africa and Guinea, who negotiate with the Europeans by their factors, and frequently in person.[b]

17, 18. (17) visit Tyre, in restoring merely.[a] hire, or

the Indies, left a quarter of dried beef in his kitchen, and found it at his return? Where are your wooden spoons and iron forks? Is it not a shame for a sober Dutchman to lie in a damask bed?' 'Go to Batavia,' answered the man of Amsterdam; 'get ten tons of gold, as I have done, and see whether you will not want to be a little better clothed, fed, and lodged.'"—*Percy Anec.*

b By. Newton.

a "It was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar much about the time that Jerusalem was, and lay as long as it did in its ruins."—*Mat. Henry.* "The past is all too old for this age of progress. Look at this throng of carriages, this multitude of men and horses, of women and children. Every one of these has a reason for going this way rather than that. If we could penetrate their minds, and ascertain their motives, an epic poem would present itself, exhibiting the business of life as it actually is, with all its passions and interests, hopes and fears. A poem, whether in verse or prose, conceived in this spirit, and impartially written, would be the epic of the age."—*Carlyle.*

b Percy Anec.

a Proh. Cyrus,

who befriended the Jews; also encouraged the Tyrians to rebuild their city.

b "The Tyrians were such sincere converts to Christianity, that in the time of Diocletian's persecution they exhibited several glorious examples of confessors and martyrs, as Eusebius himself saw, and hath amply testified in his book of the martyrs of Palestine."—*Newton.*

Ps. xlv. 12; Mar. iii. 8; Ac. xxi. 3, 4.

c Percy Anec.

a Some think that the future judgment of the world is here referred to.

b "The fig. is that of a bottle or other vessel drained of its contents by being turned upside down."—*J. A. Alexander.* Comp. Eze. xxi. 27.

c De. iv. 27, xxviii. 64, xxx. 3.

d "This accumulation of antitheses strikingly marks the indiscriminate ruin in wh. the inhabitants of Judah should be involved. No distinction would be made bet. the diff. ranks and conditions of life."—*Henderson.*

e Dr. Lyth.

e. 1. *W. Reading*, iv. 294.

wealth, her commerce is put into the figures of this *v.* (18) holiness to the Lord,[b] bec. then God shall be acknowledged and served. And the aims of her commerce shall be legitimate.

Commerce of Tyre.—Of all the cities of antiquity, Tyre was the most celebrated for the extent of its commerce. The Tyrians obtained the productions of the East, of which it was the grand emporium, by sailing up the Red Sea or Arabian Gulf, and then passing across Arabia Petræa to Rhinocolura. Alexander seems to have determined on the destruction of Tyre, in order to found a city which he might dignify with his name, and enrich with the commerce of the East; for which Alexandria was placed in a better situation than Tyre. Of Tyre, "whose merchants were princes, whose traffickers were the honourable of the earth," there now exist scarcely any traces. Some miserable cabins arranged in irregular lines, dignified with the name of streets, and a few buildings of a rather better description, occupied by the offices of the government, compose nearly the whole of the town. It still, indeed, makes some languishing efforts at commerce, and continues to export annually to Alexandria cargoes of silk and tobacco, but to a very trifling extent. "The noble dust of Alexander traced by the imagination till found stopping a beer-barrel," would scarcely afford a stronger contrast of grandeur and debasement than Tyre at the period of its siege by that conqueror, and the modern town of Soor erected on its ashes.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

1—3. (1) **behold,** this chap., with three following ones, form a connected whole, and contain a prophetic review of the judgments brought upon the land down to the time of Messiah.[a] **the earth,** first ref. to the land of Israel, but regarding it as a miniature of the world. **empty,** by flight or deportation. **upside down,** or, turn down its face.[b] **scattereth,** *see* Ge. xi. 4, 8.[c] (2) **priest,** or *prince,* the proper contrast to "the people" in a classification of society. "All ranks and classes shall fare alike."[d] (3) **Lord . . word,** this is said to declare the absolute certainty of the impending judgment.

Programme of Divine judgment in relation to Israel and times of Gentiles.—The standpoint is Jerusalem. I. Judgment commences with captivity: lay desolated, etc., because of transgression, *vv.* 1—12. II. Period of respite: glory of the Lord revealed, song of rejoicing heard, etc., *vv.* 13—16. III. Judgment assumes a more terrible form: calamities inflicted on the Romans, *v.* 18; in the dispersion, *v.* 19; in state of the land to the end of times, *v.* 20. IV. Judgment executed upon the enemies of God and of His people: on spiritual wickedness in high places, upon anti-Christian dynasties, introducing the kingdom of Christ.[e]

Desolation and misrule.—"The government of the Turks in Syria is a pure military despotism, that is, the bulk of the inhabitants are subject to the caprices of a faction of armed men, who dispose of everything according to their interest and fancy. In each government the pacha is an absolute despot. In the villages, the inhabitants, limited to the mere necessaries of life, have no arts but those without which they cannot subsist. There is no safety without the towns, nor security within their pre-

cincts" (Volney). "Few men left." While their character is thus depraved, and their condition miserable, their number is also small indeed, as the inhabitants of so extensive and fertile a region. After estimating the number of inhabitants in Syria in general, Volney remarks, "So feeble a population in so excellent a country may well excite our astonishment; but this will be increased, if we compare the present number of inhabitants with that of ancient times. We are informed by the philosophical geographer, Strabo, that the territories of Yanmia and Yoppa, in Palestine alone, were formerly so populous as to bring forty thousand armed men into the field. At present they could scarcely furnish three thousand. From the accounts we have of Judæa, in the time of Titus, which are to be esteemed tolerably accurate, that country must have contained four millions of inhabitants. If we go still further back into antiquity, we shall find the same populousness among the Philistines, the Phœnicians, and in the kingdoms of Samaria and Damascus." Though the ancient population of the land of Israel be estimated at the lowest computation, and the existing population be rated at the highest, yet that country does not now contain a tenth part of the number of inhabitants which it plentifully supported, exclusively from their industry, and from the rich resources of its own luxuriant soil, for many successive centuries; and how could it possibly have been imagined that this identical land would ever yield so scanty a subsistence to the desolate dwellers therein, and that there would be so few men left?*f*

4—6. (4) mourneth,*a* by reason of the removal of the inhabitants. None remained to till the soil, or inhabit the cities. haughty people, *lit.* "the height of the people." It is said that "Nebuchadnezzar carried into captivity two thousand of the nobles and men of wealth." (5) defiled, *i.e.* desecrated.*b* The land was sacred to Jehovah, and was profaned by transgression. ordinance, or statute. Referring to the positive Jewish institutions.*c* everlasting covenant, the patriarchal covenant, as elaborated and confirmed at Sinai.*d* (6) curse, or penalty to wh. the party who breaks the covenant is subject.*e* desolate, better, "bear their guilt."

Two gardeners.—Two gardeners, who were neighbours, had their crops of early peas killed by frost; one of them came to condole with the other on this misfortune. "Ah!" cried he, "how unfortunate we have been, neighbour! do you know I have done nothing but fret ever since. But you seem to have a fine healthy crop coming up already; what are these?" "These!" cried the other gardener, "why these are what I sowed immediatly after my loss." "What! coming up already?" cried the fretter. "Yes: while you were fretting, I was working." "What! don't you fret when you have a loss?" "Yes; but I always put it off until after I have repaired the mischief." "Why then you have no need to fret at all." "True," replied the industrious gardener; "and that's the very reason." It is very pleasant to have no longer occasion to fret over a misfortune; and it is astonishing how much might be repaired by alacrity and energy; and especially by considering that all our affairs are ordered by infinite wisdom and goodness.*f*

7—9. (7) new wine, *must.* No one is left to attend to the

vv. 1—5. *Dr. J. Erskine*, ii. 410.

v. 2. *Dr. J. C. Vaughan*, 221.

Examining the sun-dial, to ascertain if the clocks were right, Gotthold said to himself, "Dials are no doubt most ingenious contrivances; but, however ingenious, they are of no use when the sun does not shine. It is the same with us. Destitute of the grace of God, and of the quickening and enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, we, too, whatever be our natural gifts and talents, are good for nothing."

f Keith.

a Is. iii. 26; Ho. iv. 3.

b "Therefore they must be driven out, as Cain was driven out of Eden."—*Knobel.*

c "Ahaz had gone so far as to close the temple. 2 Ch. xxviii. 24."—*Spk. Com.*

d Ex. xxxi. 16; Le. xxiv. 8.

e De. xxix. 20.

vv. 4—6. *J. Alting, Op.* ii. pars. 4, 60.

v. 5. *W. J. E. Bennett*, 123.

f R. T. S.

a Je. vii. 34, xvi.

9, xxv. 10; Eze. xxvi. 13; Ho. ii. 11.

newly-gathered grapes. **merryhearted,** with prob. ref. to the joy usually shown at the vintage-season. (8) **tabrets,** timbrels. A kind of drum, or tambourine.[a] "Music is the common token and accompaniment of mirth." (9) **be bitter,** *i.e.* by reason of national calamities they should lose all appetite for that which had been associated with joy and song.[b]

b "God has many ways to embitter wine and strong drink to those that love them and have the highest gust of them: distemper of body, anguish of mind, the ruin of the estate or country, will make the strong drink bitter, and all the delights of sense tasteless and insipid."—*Mat. Henry.*

Rum and ruin.—The Rev. Dr. Scoresby, preacher to seamen in Liverpool, now vicar of Bradford, was for many years the master of a whale ship, in the northern seas. He relates the following fact, of which he was an eye-witness. It is given in his own words. "A collier brig was stranded on the Yorkshire coast, and I had occasion to assist in the distressing service of rescuing a part of the crew by drawing them up a vertical cliff, two or three hundred feet in altitude, by means of a very small rope, the only material at hand. The first two men who caught hold of the rope were hauled safely up to the top; but the next, after being drawn to a considerable height, slipped his hold and fell; and with the fourth and last who ventured upon this only chance of life, the rope gave way, and he also was plunged into the foaming breakers beneath. Immediately afterwards the vessel broke up, and the remnant of the ill-fated crew perished before our eyes. What now was the cause of this heartrending event? Was it stress of weather, or a contrary wind, or unavoidable accident? No such thing. It was the entire want of moral conduct in the crew. Every sailor, to a man, was in a state of intoxication! The helm was entrusted to a boy ignorant of the coast. He ran the vessel upon the rock at Whitby, and one-half of the miserable dissipated crew awoke to consciousness in eternity."[c]

"Troops of furies march in the drunkard's triumph."—*Zimmerman.*

c Dr. Cheever.

10—12. (10) of **confusion,**[a] or desolation, that is so soon to lie desolate. **house shut up,** "on account of the ruins that block up the door."[b] (11) **for wine,** which cannot be procured. A fig. for the entire cessation of all joyousness, and all good fellowship. (12) **gate . . destruction,** or, "into ruins is the gate beaten down."[c]

a "Which, having set at nought Divine law and order, had fallen back into a state of chaos."—*Spk. Com.*

b Wordsworth.

Wine in excess.—Take especial care that thou delight not in wine; for there never was any man that came to honour or preferment that loved it: for it transformeth a man into a beast, decayeth health, poisoneth the breath, destroyeth natural heat, brings a man's stomach to an artificial heat, deformeth the face, rotteth the teeth, and, to conclude, maketh a man contemptible, soon old, and despised of all wise and worthy men; hated in thy servants, in thyself, and companions; for it is a bewitching and infectious vice. A drunkard will never shake off the delight of beastliness; for the longer it possesses a man, the more he will delight in it, and the older he groweth, the more he will be subject to it; for it dulleth the spirits and destroyeth the body, as ivy doth the old tree, or as the worm that engendereth in the kernel of the nut. Take heed, therefore, that such a cureless canker pass not thy youth, nor such a beastly infection thy old age: for then shall all thy life be but as the life of a beast, and after thy death thou shalt only leave a shameful infamy to thy posterity, who shall study to forget that such a one was their father.[d]

"Which would be the quantity of rubbish collected before the houses that were left, that they would be quite inaccessible."—*Henderson.*

Comp. Is. xxiii. 1; Je. xiii. 19.

c "With a great tumult the gate is battered down."—*Horsley.*

d Sir W. Raleigh.

13—15. (13) **shaking . . tree,**[a] *see* ch. xvii. 6; the after-

a "Men shall be

picking, or gleaning. (14) **from the sea,** *i.e.* the shores of the Mediterranean, where some of the Jews found refuge.[b] (15) **in the fires,** lit. *the lights,* with prob. reference to the E. in which they would be held captives. But it is a better suggestion that the reference may be to the volcanic fires known to be in those islands and coasts of the Mediterranean where the exiles had taken refuge.[c] This accords with the mention of the "isles of the sea."

Glorifyi g God in the fires (*v.* 15).—I. Fires of martyrdom, Smithfield, martyrs' tablet: describe fires on Plain of Dura. "When thou walkest through the fire," "Quenched the violence of fire." II. Intermittent fires of temptation, fiery darts of adversary. III. Testing fires of prosperity. IV. Purifying fires of affliction. How is God glorified in the fires? 1. When His power is glorified by the tempering of the flame; 2. When His wisdom is glorified by the destruction of the dross; 3. When His grace is glorified by the perfecting of character; 4. When His mercy is glorified in the salvation of him who is saved so as by fire. Thus the afflicted glorifies God by patience, faith. Many can glorify God no other way. Hence treasure up knowledge for the day of fiery trial.

Love of a martyr.—

Love constitutes my crime:
For this they keep me here,
Imprison'd thus so long a time
For Him I hold so dear.
And yet I am, as when I came,
The subject of this holy flame.

How can I better grow?
How from my own heart fly?
Those who imprison'd me should know
True love can never die!
Yea, tread and crush it with disdain,
And it will live and burn again.

And am I then to blame?
He's always in my sight:
And, having once inspired the flame,
He always keeps it bright.
For this they smite me and reprove,
Because I cannot cease to love.

What power shall dim its ray,
Dropp'd burning from above?
Eternal life shall ne'er decay:
God is the life of love.
And when its source of life is o'er,
And only then, 'twill shine no more.[d]

16. uttermost part, lit. *the wing.* **heard songs,** the Prophet gets a vision of the joy of the captives in Cyrus's decree for their return: but immediately the vision changes, and he mourns over all the suffering they would have to go through before the return.[a] **leanness,** or wasting sickness. **treacherous,** *etc.*, trans. "The deceivers deceive, with deceit the deceivers deceive." A wailing over the sad defection and wickedness of the Prophet's own people.

scarce as the single olives left to be shaken down, or the few grapes left to be gleaned, after the harvest is gathered. Those who remain shall glorify God and His dealings."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b "It may be noted that 'it was chiefly in lands bordering on the Mediterranean that the first Christian churches rose.'"—*Spk. Com.*

c So *Henderson.*

v. 15. *G. Whitefield,* 670; *W. Jay,* iii. 222.

One Adrianus in ancient times, seeing the martyrs suffer such grievous things in the cause of Christ, asked, "What is that which enables them to bear such sufferings?' One of them replied, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things wh.God hath prepared for them that love Him." These words were like apples of gold in a network of silver, for they made him not only a convert, but a martyr too.

d Mad. Guyon.

a "We hear promises and praise to the righteous, but our actual experience is that of misery."—*J. A. Alexander.* Je. v. 11.

v. 16. *T. Bradbury,* i. 193.

"Men speak ill of thee; so they be ill men. If they spake worse, 'twere better; for of such to be dispraised is the most perfect praise. What can his censure hurt me, whom the world hath censured vile before me?"—*Ben Jonson.*

a Comp. Je. xlviii. 43, 44.

b "'Fear' is the term applied to the cords with feathers of all colours which, when fluttered in the air, scare beasts into the pitfall, or birds into the snare."—*Fausset.*

La. xxi. 35.

c **Ge. vii. 11, etc.**

ev. 18–20. *S. Davies*, iii. 176.

"When earthly comforts shall be taken from us, and at the day of judgment, then an ill conscience, look where it will, it hath a matter of terror. If it look up, there is the Judge armed with vengeance; if it look beneath there is hell ready to swallow it; if it look on the one side, there is the devil accusing and helping conscience; if it look around about, there is heaven and earth, and all on fire, and within there is hell. Where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?"—*Sibbes.*

d Dr. Cheever.

Illustrations.—1. The man's blindness brought him what he might never have received, if he had enjoyed vision—a knowledge of Jesus. A minister was recovering from a dangerous illness. A friend said: "It will be a long time before you will sufficiently retrieve your strength, and regain vigour enough of mind to preach as usual." The good man answered: "You are mistaken, my friend: for this six weeks' illness has taught me more divinity than all my past studies, and all my ten years' ministry put together." 2. A blind lady wrote once:

"My vision Thou hast dimmed,
That I might see Thyself,
Thyself alone!"

17, 18. (17) **fear . . snare,** the fig. in the verse is taken from the hunted animal, which is driven into the pit, or the snare,[a] **earth,** still used with reference to the land of Israel. (18) **fear,**[b] *formido*, or scarecrow **windows . . open,** recalling the desolations of the Divine judgment in the time of the flood.[c] "The flood of ruin submerging everything." **foundations,** *etc.*, as in time of earthquake.

A hardened conscience alarmed.—"Richard Crowninshield was a murderer. As long as he thought the evidence of his crime was concealed he was cheerful and confident even in prison. He was a very desperate, hardened, strong-minded, remorseless villain. He was the leader of a knot of infidels, who jeered at all sacred things, and taught young men in habits of abandoned wickedness. There were accessories to his crime, not one of whom, as he thought, was suspected; and he knew that so long as that was the case, not a link of condemning evidence could be obtained against him. At length a letter, intercepted in the post-office, led to the arrest of one of his accomplices. That arrested man was carried into the gaol at midnight: but so profound was the sleep of that hardened murderer, that all the clanging of the bolts and bars of the prison, at that unusual hour, did not wake him. The next morning the sheriff came into his cell and entered into familiar conversation with him. He was standing calmly at the foot of his truckle bed. 'Well,' said the sheriff, 'did you hear the noise last night?' 'Noise? no: what noise? I slept well.' 'Why, did you not know that they had arrested Frank Knapp, and brought him here last night at midnight?' The strong, guilty man put his hand to the wall to steady himself, but, unable to conceal his feelings, or to recover from the shock, fell back senseless on the bed. The recoil, the scorpion sting, had reached him at last: his sin had found him out; the sword had pierced through the rocky casement around the conscience of the desperate criminal, and was grinding in his soul. What passed that night none can tell, nor how long the man endured the terrible conflict with conscience and despair. But when the sheriff entered his cell next morning, he was hanging dead, self-murdered. Such is the power of sudden overwhelming evidence, bringing the sense as well as the proof of guilt into the soul. Men would flee from it, if they could, at the last day. If there were still a third world into which souls could plunge out of the eternal world by a second self-murder, they would do it."[d]

19, 20. (19) **broken down,** the fig. of a house ruined by an earthquake.[a] (20) **like a cottage,** or garden-hut:[b] "hammock

suspended between the branches of a tree, liable to be tossed hither and thither in a storm, to the no small peril of its inhabitant." transgression . . heavy, *i.e.* the penalty of the trangression.[a]

Drunkenness an incurable vice.—When this vice has taken fast hold of a man, farewell industry, farewell emulation, farewell attention to things worthy of attention, farewell love of virtuous society, farewell decency of manners, and farewell, too, even an attention to person: everything is sunk by this predominant and brutal appetite. In how many instances do we see men who have begun life with the brightest prospects before them, and who have closed it without one ray of comfort and consolation. Young men, with good fortune, good talents, good tempers, good hearts, and sound constitutions, only by being drawn into the vortex of the drunkard, have become by degrees the most loathsome and despicable of mankind. In the house of the drunkard there is no happiness for any one. All is uncertainty and anxiety. He is not the same man for any one day at a time. No one knows of his outgoings or his incomings. When he will rise, or when he will lie down to rest, is wholly a matter of chance. That which he swallows for what he calls pleasure brings pain, as hourly as the night brings the morning. Poverty and misery are in the train. To avoid these results, we are called upon to make no sacrifice. Abstinence requires no aid to accomplish it. Our own will is all that is requisite; and if we have not the will to avoid contempt, disgrace, and misery, we deserve neither relief nor compassion.[d]

21—23. (21) high ones, the Levites, or ecclesiastical leaders, as distinguished from "kings and princes," the civil leaders.[a] Or the passage may generally refer to kings and potentates. (22) pit, or dungeon. visited, and brought forth from their captivity. The "many days" may be applied to the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity. (23) moon, *etc.*,[b] figures of speech to indicate the glorious splendour of the restored Israel, and perhaps also of Messiah's reign, in contrast with all other world-dominions.

The reign of Christ glorious (*v.* 23).—To give you some idea of the Messiah's advent, as it is here described, I will endeavour to set before you—I. The nature of His kingdom: differs from all others, laws are not restrictive only, but preceptive. II. The extent of His kingdom: always extending, will presently be universal. III. The happiness of His subjects: estimated by honour, wealth, enjoyment. IV. The glory of His reign: Christ will reign in every heart and soul. Apply:—1. What you should effect on earth; 2. What blessedness awaits you in the eternal world.[c]

Kingdom of God to be prayed and worked for.—Wise work is cheerful, as a child's work is. Now, I want you to take one thought home with you, and let it stay with you. Almost every one has been taught to pray daily, "Thy kingdom come." Now, if we hear a man swear in the streets, we think it very wrong, and say he takes God's name in vain. But there's a twenty times worse way of taking His name in vain than that. It is, to ask God for what we don't want. He does not like that sort of prayer. If you don't want a thing, don't ask for it: such asking is the worst mockery of your King you can mock Him with; the soldiers striking Him on the head with the reed was nothing to

a "It is rent and fractured; it bursts open in fissures; its basement gives way: then it totters, sways rapidly to and fro, and falls."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Heb. *a hanging couch*, suspended from the trees by cords, such as Niebuhr describes the Arab keepers of lands as having, to enable them to keep watch, and at the same time be secure from wild beasts."—*Fausset.*

c Ps. xxxviii. 4.

d Cobbett.

a "What Isaiah here predicts is the subversion for a season of the entire Jewish polity, or the removal to Babylon of those who ministered in the temple, and of the royal state."—*Henderson.*

b "For sun, moon, etc., as symbols of governments and rulers, comp. Joel ii. 31, iii. 15; Is. xiii. 10; Mk. xiii. 24, 26; Re. xx. 11.

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"As in former times the custom hath been, that when one is taken prisoner in the fields, he that pays his ransom shall become always after his lord; even so, likewise, Christ, when we were bond-slaves under hell, death, and condemna-

tion, paid the ransom of our redemption, and free us from the bondage of sin and Satan: and therefore in that respect He is our Lord."—*Cuadray.*

"At Athens there were two temples—a temple of virtue and a temple of honour; and there was no going into the temple of honour but through the temple of virtue: so the kingdoms of grace and glory are so joined together that we cannot go into the kingdom of glory but through the kingdom of grace. Many people aspire after the kingdom of glory, but never look after grace; but these two, which God hath joined together, may not be put asunder; the kingdom of grace leads to the kingdom of glory."—*T. Watson.*

d Ruskin.

that. If you do not wish for His kingdom, don't pray for it. But if you do, you must do more than pray for it; you must work for it. And to work for it, you must know what it is; we have all prayed for it many a day without thinking. Observe, it is a kingdom that is to come to us; we are not to go to it. Also, it is not to be a kingdom of the dead, but of the living. Also, it is not to come all at once, but quietly; nobody knows how. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Also, it is not to come outside of us, but in the hearts of us: "The kingdom of God is within you." And being within us, it is not a thing to be seen, but to be felt; and though it brings all substance of good with it, it does not consist in that: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" joy, that is to say, in the holy, healthful, and helpful spirit. Now, if we want to work for this kingdom, and to bring it and enter into it, there's just one condition to be first accepted. You must enter into it as children, or not at all: "Whosoever will not receive it as a little child, shall not enter therein." And again, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Of such," observe. Not of children themselves, but of such as children. I believe most mothers who read that text, think that all heaven is to be full of babies. But that's not so. There will be children there, but the hoary head is the crown. "Length of days, and long life and peace," that is the blessing; not to die in babyhood. Children die but for their parents' sins; God means them to live, but He can't let them always; then they have their earlier place in heaven: and the little child of David, vainly prayed for: the little child of Jeroboam, killed by his mother's step on its own threshold—they will be there. But weary old David, and weary old Barzillai, having learned children's lessons at last, will be there too: and the one question for us all, young or old, is, Have we learned our child's lesson? It is the character of children we want, and must gain at our peril.[d]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

1. **Lord**, better *Jehovah*. **my God**, *comp.* Ex. xv. 2, **11**; Ps. cxviii. 28, cxlv. 1, etc. **wonderful things**, *lit.* wonders: as Ex. xv. 11.[a] **counsels of old**, original plans and purposes. God keeps to them, working them out in the course of long years. We may doubt, but God surely proves faithful. He, the covenant-*maker*, is also the covenant-*keeper*.[b]

The language of real piety (*v.* 1).—Piety has often been counterfeited, true piety knows nothing of guile. This is the language of—I. Choice. II. Assurance. III. Enjoyment. IV. Expectation. V. Gratitude.[c]

Seeking first the kingdom of God.—A recruiting officer in Massachusetts heard that a young man was ready to enlist, and hastened to call upon him. He was put off with the statement that he was not ready yet. The call was several times repeated, with like results. This vacillation seemed strange to those who knew the young man's straightforward character. Afterwards, he confessed that he did not wish to enlist till he felt himself

a Ps. xl. 5, cxlvi. 2.

b He. vi. 17, 18.

v. 1. *W. Reading*, ii. 650; *R. Warner*, i. 36.

c Theta in 100 Sks. "These two kingdoms of grace and glory differ not specifically, but gradually; they differ not in nature but only in degree. The kingdom of grace is nothing but the inchoa-

ready to die. He was profane and wicked, as were all his friends and associates, save one sister. He did not have confidence enough to communicate his feelings to any one, but purloined his sister's Bible, and began to read at the beginning, to learn how to become a Christian. He came to the Commandments in course, and in them thought he had found that which would prepare him to enlist. He learned them by heart, and then tried to keep them. He was conscious of breaking only one, that against profanity. Against this he struggled; but the more he struggled, the more he swore. He then thought he would try prayer. He could not put off the recruiting officer much longer. He knelt, and cried out in much abasement and excitement, "Lord, help, help!" His prayer was answered. He passed the provocations of the next day without an oath. When the recruiting officer next came, he put down his name, and said, "Now I am ready to face anything; rebels or death." He went before the Church, and told his experience, and was reminded that he had said nothing about Jesus. His explanation was, that he had not got to Him yet in His Bible. He had read to the Psalms, but thought he must begin at the other end to find Jesus. He went to the army, as every one should enter the battle of life, a happy Christian, ready to do, suffer, or die.

2, 3. (2) a city, Babylon, the world-renowned city. heap, or pile of rubbish.[a] defenced city, or citadel. Fortified city. of strangers, *i.e.* of strangers and enemies to Israel. (3) strong people, it is difficult to see who are here meant. It would be most proper to refer it to the Babylonians, who were to be deeply impressed with the judgments of Jehovah on themselves. (Comp. Da. iv. 34, 35, vi. 25—27.)

Goodness of God.—As the sun sends forth a benign and gentle influence on the seed of plants, that it may invite forth the active and plastic power from its recess and secrecy, that, by rising into the tallness and dimensions of a tree, it may still receive a greater and more refreshing influence from its foster-father, the prince of all the bodies of light, and, in all these emanations, the sun itself receives no advantage, but the honour of doing benefits: so doth the Almighty Father of all the creatures. He at first sends forth His blessings upon us, that we, by using them aright, should make ourselves capable of greater; while giving glory to God, and doing homage to Him, are nothing to His advantage but only to ours; our duties towards Him being vapours ascending from the earth, not at all to refresh the regions of the clouds, but to return back in a fruitful and refreshing shower; and God created us, not that we can increase His felicity, but that He might have a subject receptive of felicity from Him.[b]

4, 5. (4) thou, *i.e.* Jehovah. strength, or stronghold. blast . . wall, as a storm of rain beats upon a wall, so the Bab. persecution beat upon the captive Jews.[a] (5) heat . . place, the heat is brought down, or tempered, by the "passing shadow of a cloud."[b] branch . . ones, better, "the song of the formidable ones is suppressed:" with special reference to their triumph song in the destruction of God's people.

The storm and the refuge (*v.* 4).—I. Of what do storms remind us? 1. That this world is a place for storms; 2. That this life

tion or beginning of the kingdom of glory; the kingdom of grace is glory in the seed, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the flower; the kingdom of grace is glory in the day break, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the full meridian; the kingdom of grace is glory militant, and the kingdom of glory is grace triumphant. There is such an inseparable connection between these two kingdoms, grace and glory, that there is no passing into the one kingdom but by the other."—*T. Watson.*

a "'Heaps' is a graphic picture of Nineveh and Babylon, as they now are."—*Fausset.*

Je. li. 26, 37; Re. xix. 1—3.

v. 2. *H. M'Neile,* 101.

A certain emperor coming into Egypt, to show the zeal he had to the public good, said to the Egyptians, "Draw from me as from your River Nilus."

b Bp. Taylor.

a "The Chaldee paraphrase has *a storm which overthrows a wall.* And this is prob. the right sense; a storm so violent that it sweeps down walls before it."—*Mat. Arnold.*

is a time for storms; 3. That every storm is raised and guided by the hand of God: 4. Every storm so raised is benevolently designed. II. What does the refuge suggest? 1. It is well that the refuge is God, and no creature; 2. God is often spoken of as a refuge; 3. The refuge must be outside the storm, or so much stronger as to resist its influence. Apply:—(1) Expect storms, and wonder that they are so few: (2) What refuge have we against the next storm? 3. How welcome we are to this refuge! 4. What can we do to aid those who are out in the storm?[c]

The shadow of a cloud.—About mid-day, when the heat was very oppressive, a small cloud, scarcely observable by the eye, passed over the disc of the burning sun. Immediately the intense heat abated, a gentle breeze sprang up, and we felt refreshed. The immediate relief afforded us by the interposition of a small and almost imperceptible cloud, taught us the lesson of the Prophet, with what Divine ease and speed God can relieve His suffering Church, and bring low her proudest enemies."

6, 7. (6) **this mountain,** *i.e.* Zion. **fat things,** richest meats. **wines on the lees,** *i.e.* matured wines: bettered by having been kept.[a] **well refined,** carefully strained. (7) **destroy,** cause to disappear. **face of the covering,** the mist of ignorance and idolatry wh. had covered the land. **vail,** hiding the true apprehension of God.[b]

The feast for all people (*vv.* 6, 7).—I. The feast here promised and described. 1. The place where God engages to make the feast; 2. The feast itself: the Gospel; 3. The provisions carefully selected, dearly purchased, supremely excellent, highly gratifying; 4. The guests for whom the feast is provided. II. The benefits which result from attendance at the feast. 1. Removal of darkness: 2. Conquest over death; 3. Deliverance from sorrow; 4. Justification from reproach. Apply:—(1) Come; (2) When you come expect what is promised; (3) And let your deportment be answerable to the entertainment.[c]

A free Gospel.—We have been afraid of making it too free, lest men should be led into licentiousness; as if it were possible to preach too free a Gospel, or as if its freeness could lead men into sin. It is only a free Gospel that can bring men peace, and it is only a free Gospel that can make men holy. Luther's preaching was summed up in these two points: "That we are justified by faith alone, and that we must be assured that we are justified;" and it was this that he urged on his brother Brentius to preach *usque ad fastidium;* and it was by such free, full, bold preaching of the glorious Gospel, untrammelled by works, merits, terms, conditions, and unclouded by the fancied humility of doubts, fears, uncertainties, that such blessed success accompanied his labours.

8. death in victory, fig. **for full** recovery of the people from the national death of captivity. But the words are full of yet richer suggestions of Messiah's work.[a] **wipe . . faces,** as Re. vii. 17 xxi. 4. **rebuke,** *etc.*,[b] the shame of their degradation in captivity.

Victory in death.—A clergyman in the county of Tyrone had for some weeks observed a little ragged boy come every Sabbath and place himself in the centre of the aisle, directly opposite the pulpit, where he seemed astonishingly attentive to the service,

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b "As clouds quell heat, so God quells the tumult of the 'strange children.' "—*Mat. Arnold.*

"God could relieve His people as speedily as when a thick cloud floating across the sky cools the atmosphere."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 4. *J. Douglas*, 27; *W. Cleaver*, 191; *A. Roberts*, i. 23; *T. Mossman*, 13.

c S. Martin.

a "The lees, or sediment, of wine produced by the bubbles of fixed air, which during fermentation rise to the surface, and bring along with them the skins, stones, or other grosser matters of the grapes, thus forming a scum or spongy crust, which, after a time, breaks in pieces and falls to the bottom. When this has taken place, the wine becomes clear; but as the fermentation does not cease, it increases in the excellence of its qualities by being suffered still to continue for a time on the lees."—*Henderson.* *b* 2 Co. iii. 15, 16, 18.

c Alpha in 100 Sks.

a 1 Co. xv. 54.

b "The reproach of failure cast on the people of righteousness."—*Mat. Arnold.*

v. 8. *T. Boston*, ix. 95; *Dr. J. Erskine*, ii. 476; *G. Campbell*, 435;

and, as it were, eating his words. He was desirous of knowing who the child was; and for this purpose hastened out after sermon, several times, but never could see him, as he vanished the moment service was over, and no one knew whence he came, or anything about him. At length the boy was missed from his usual situation in the church for some weeks. At this time a man called on the minister, and told him a person very ill was desirous of seeing him; but added, "I am really ashamed to ask you to go so far, but it is a child of mine, and he refused to have any one but you. He is altogether an extraordinary boy, and talks a great deal about things that I do not understand." The clergyman promised to go, and kept his promise. The rain poured down in torrents, and he had six miles of rugged mountain to pass. On arriving where he was directed, he saw a most wretched cabin indeed: and the man he had seen in the morning was waiting at the door. He was shown in, and found the inside of the hovel as miserable as the outside. In a corner, on a little straw, he beheld a person stretched out, whom he recognised as the little boy who had so regularly attended his church. As he approached the wretched bed, the child raised himself up, and stretching forth his arms said, "His own right hand hath gotten Him the victory," and immediately expired![c]

9. our God, rejoicing and boasting in Him. No longer feeling ashamed to be called by His name.[a]

The day of the Lord (*v.* 9).—I. Let us notice the day of the Lord's appearing. 1. It will be the last day; 2. The great day; 3. The judgment-day. II. The character of those who will rejoice in that day. 1. Not Pharisees; 2. Nor those who are ashamed of Christ; 3. But believers; 4. Watchful believers. III. The happiness of saints at the coming of Christ. 1. They are delivered from temporal woes; 2. They are saved from sin; 3. They are saved from hell; 4. They are to enjoy the bliss of heaven; 5. Their deliverance and happiness will be eternal, for death is swallowed up in victory. Apply:—(1) How foolish to neglect the things that belong to our peace; (2) There is salvation in Christ alone; (3) Be diligent, etc.[b]

Reckoning at the judgment-day.—What, do you think that God doth not remember our sins which we do not regard? for while we sin the score runs on, and the Judge setteth down all in the table of remembrance, and His scroll reacheth up to heaven. Item, for lending to usury; item, for racking of rents; item, for starching thy ruffs; item, for curling thy hair; item, for painting thy face; item, for selling of benefices; item, for starving of souls; item, for playing at cards: item, for sleeping in the church; item, for profaning the Sabbath-day, with a number more hath God to call to account, for every one must answer for himself. The fornicator, for taking of filthy pleasure; the careless prelate, for murthering so many thousand souls; the landlord, for getting money from his poor tenants by racking of his rents; see the rest, all they shall come like very sheep when the trumpet shall sound, and the heaven and earth shall come to judgment against them: when the heavens shall vanish like a scroll, and the earth shall consume like fire, and all the creatures standing against them; the rocks shall cleave asunder, and the mountains shake, and the foundation of the earth shall tremble, and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us, fall upon us, and

T. W. Mossman, 116.

Doctor Taylor as he was going to martyrdom—"I shall this day deceive the worms in Hadley churchyard," and fetching a leap or two when he came within two miles of Hadley, "Now," saith he, "lack I but two stiles, and I am even at my Father's house."

"He who fears death has already lost the life he covets."—*Cato.*

c Whitecross.

a "Those who have trusted God thro' the darkness will, when the returning light comes, say, 'This is the God of whom we have spoken, and for trusting in whom we have so often been derided. We have waited long, but He has come at last, to vindicate His truth and our reliance on Him."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Studies for Pulpit.

v. 9. *J. Browne*, 457; *J. Penn*, ii. 165; *J. Morton*, i. 237; *W. Jones*, i. 128; *E. Cooper*, iv. 225; *J. Randall*, 275; *J. C. Hare*, i. 95; *J. J. Blunt*, 160; *Bp. Medley*, 1.

"An ill conscience when it should be most comforted, then it is most terrible. At the hour of death we should have most comfort, if we had any wisdom."—*R. Sibbes.*

hide us from the presence of His anger and wrath, whom we have not cared to offend. But they shall not be covered and hid; but then shall they go the black way, to the snakes and serpents, to be tormented of devils for ever.[c]

10—12. (10) rest, *i.e.* in order that He may continue at, and complete, His work of grace. Moab, put here as the symbol of all Israel's remaining enemies. trodden down, as worthless straw is by the foot of cattle. dunghill, better, dung-pit, cesspool. The word used is *Madmenah*, which seems to refer to the Moabitish town so called. (11) spread . . hands, to execute His judgments. Usually the fig. of spreading hands refers to prayer. to swim, *i.e.* hand over hand.[a] spoils, better, artifices, spells of sorcery. (12) fortress, *etc.*, again referring to Babylon.

Note on v. 10.—Dr. A. Clarke has, for "for the dunghill," "under the wheels of the car." This may allude to their ancient cars of war, under which Moab was to be crushed, or under her own heathen cars, in which the gods were taken out in procession. To spread forth the hands, as a person when swimming, may refer to the involuntary stretching forth of the limbs when the body was crushed with the weight of the car: or to the custom of those who, when they go before the car in procession, prostrate themselves on the ground, and spread out their hands and legs as if swimming, till they have measured the full distance the car has to go, by throwing themselves on the earth at the length of every six feet, and by motions as if in the act of swimming. The whole of this is done as a penance for sin, or in compliance with a vow made in sickness or despair.[b]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

1, 2. (1) that day, the period of the return. this song, an ideal song wh. would be suitable for that time of gladness. strong city, not by reason of its condition and fortifications, but because specially under the Divine protection. salvation, *i.e.* God's own saving grace. walls and bulwarks,[a] by the bulwarks we understand the trench with the ante-mural earthworks exterior to the wall. (2) righteous . enter,[b] some of the exiles are inhabiting Zion, and they are bidden give welcome to a new company of returning ones.

Plan of salvation.—The plan of salvation is likened unto a vine which has fallen down from the boughs of an oak. It lies prone upon the ground; it crawls in the dust; and all its tendrils and claspers, which were formed to hold it in the lofty place from which it had fallen, are twined around the weed and the bramble, and, having no strength in itself, it lies fruitless and corrupting, tied down to the base things of the earth. Now, how shall the vine arise from its fallen condition? But one way is possible for the vine to rise again to the place from whence it had fallen. The bough of the lofty oak must be let down, or some communication must be formed connected with the top of the oak, and, at the same time, with the earth; then, when the bough of the oak was let down to the place where the vine lay, its tender claspers might fasten upon it, and, thus supported, it might raise itself up, and bear fruit again in the lofty place from whence it fell. So with man. His affections had fallen from God, and were

[c] *H. Smith.*

[a] The people of the E. all swim "hand over hand," alternately raising each arm out of the water, and thus never presenting the whole breast, but only one side, to the stream. Among the Assyrian sculptures which represent persons in the act of swimming, there is not one which gives a different testimony.

[b] *Roberts.*

[a] "God's salvation shall be in place of walls and bulwarks to His Zion. See Is. lx. 18 — 22." — *Mat. Arnold.*

[b] As a nation they are regarded as being righteous, bec. they had given up their idolatry, and again entered into covenant with Jehovah.

Ps. cxviii. 19, 20; Is. lx. 11.

See *A. Fuller*, 503.

v. 1. *Dr. Young*, 3; *J. Plumtre's Pop. Com.* ii. 289.

vv. 1, 2. *W. Reid-Wig*, iv. 307.

fastened to the base things of the earth. Jesus Christ came down, and by His humanity stood upon the earth, and by His Divinity raised His hands, and united Himself with the Deity of the everlasting Father. Thus the fallen affections of man may fasten upon Him, and twine around Him, until they again ascend to the bosom of the Godhead from whence they fell.[c]

3. keep, by the guardings and defendings of Thy salvation. him, *i.e.* the nation. But the promise is equally applicable to individuals. perfect peace, lit. *peace, peace.* The quietness of conscious security. Especially the quietness of perfect trust in the Almighty One. stayed,[a] fully reliant; in no sense confident in its own plans and schemes. trusteth, the form of word "implies entire *repose* of faith, such as leads a man to cast away human anxiety."[b]

Trust in God recommended (*vv.* 3, 4).—I. Show what blessedness God will confer upon His people; the unbeliever is an utter stranger to peace, but God promises this blessing to believers, because they put their trust in Him. II. Urge you to seek that blessedness in God's appointed way. 1. Consider what a God we have to trust in: 2. Let us trust in Him with all our hearts. Address—(1) Those who know not this blessedness: (2) Those who through the weakness of their faith do not yet partake of it; (3) Those who profess to enjoy that peace.[c]

The Rev. J. Hervey.—The Rev. Mr. Monteith, of Alnwick, on his way from London, called on the Rev. James Hervey. Being asked by him, "What news in the city?" he replied, "Everything is preparing for war." Mr. Hervey remarked, with much sweetness and composure, "Well, God will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him: because he trusteth in Him."[d]—*Christian in the world.*—I remember an illustration in a black folio of the seventeenth century: As a watch, though tossed up and down by the agitation of him who carries it, does not on that account undergo any perturbation or disorder in the working of the spring and wheels within; so the true Christian's heart, however shaken by the joltings it meets with in the pressure and tumult of the world, suffers no derangement in the adjustment and action of its machinery; the hand still points to eternity.[e]—*Calmness in danger—the Christian in the storm.*—In a storm at sea, when the deep seemed ready to devour the voyagers, one man stood composed and cheerful amid the agitated throng. They eagerly asked him why he feared not. Was he an experienced seaman? Did he see reason to expect that the ship would ride the tempest through? No, he was no expert sailor, but he was a trustful Christian. He was not sure that the ship would ride the storm, but the sinking could do no harm to him. His answer was, "Though I sink to-day I shall only drop gently into the hollow of my Father's hand, for He holds all these waters there."[f]

4. for ever, *i.e.* always and altogether. Jehovah, or Jah: the Eternal, Immutable, and Covenant-Keeping God. strength, or an "everlasting Rock," the Rock of Ages.[a]

Perfect trust, perfect peace (*v.* 4).—Man must trust; he has no resources of his own. I. The true object of supreme trust, "the Lord Jehovah." 1. His sufficiency; 2. His graciousness: 3. His immutability. II. The character of the trust enjoined. 1.

c J. B. Walker.

a Ps. cxi. 8, cxii. 8.

b Spk. Com. r. 3. *H. Binning*, iii. 56; *J. Steel*, 527; *Dr S. Johnson*, ii. 1; *Dr. J. Drysdale*, i. 301; *W. Jay*, i. 49; *J. Venn*, ii. 358; *W. Butcher*, iii. 200; *J. Stock*, 36; *H. White*, 341; *J. Summerfield*, 424; *J. Williams*, i. 153; *J. Sibbald*, 73; *S. Knight*, ii. 558; *H. Goodwin*, iv. 128.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d R. T. S.

"Faith is not only intended to pacify the conscience and purify the heart, but also to rescue the mind from earthly troubles. Our passage through life is attended with storms; we sail upon a boisterous sea, where many tempests are felt, and many are feared, which look black, and bode mischief, but pass over. Now, faith is designed for an anchor, to keep the mind steady, and give it rest; even as Isaiah saith, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee'" (Is. xxvi. 3).—*Herrey.*

e R. A. Wilmott.

f W. Arnot.

a Is. xlv. 17; De. xxxii. 15; 1 Sa. ii. 2.

"The eternity and immutability of God are here alleged as a ground of the most unlimited

confidence on the part of the people."—*Henderson.*

"Those that trust in God shall not only find in Him, but receive from Him, everlasting strength, strength that will carry them to everlasting life, to that blessedness wh. is for ever."—*Mat. Henry.*

c. 4. *Dr. Conant*, iv. 409; *W. Langhorne*, ii. 174; *W. A. Gunn*, 131; *T. Rogers*, ii. 309; *G. R. Gleig*, 218.

b Stems and Twigs.

c Sir H. Davy.

"Remember what thou wert before thy birth: Nothing. What thou wert for many years after: Weakness. What in all thy life: A great sinner. What in all thy excellences: A mere debtor to God, to thy parents, to the earth, to all the creatures. Upon these or the like meditations, if we dwell, and frequently retire to them, we shall see nothing more reasonable than to be humble, and nothing more foolish than to be proud."—*Bp. Taylor.*

a Tupper.

"Family pride entertains many unsocial opinions."—*Zimmerman.*

b Guthrie.

a With special reference to the straight course prepared for them in the pro-

Absolute; 2. Unquestioning; 3. Comprehensive; 4. Continuous. III. The result of such trust, "perfect peace." 1. Fearlessness of present foes; 2. Calmness amid present peril; 3. Contentment in the midst of want; 4. Tranquillity in the prospect of the future.[b]

Comfort of believing.—I envy not quality of the mind or intellect in others; nor genius, power, wit, or fancy: but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and, I believe, most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing; for it makes life a discipline of goodness; creates new hopes when all hopes vanish; and throws over the decay, the destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights; awakens life even in death, and from corruption and decay calls up beauty and divinity; makes an instrument of torture and shame the ladder of ascent to Paradise: and, far above all combinations of earthly hopes, calls up the most delightful visions and plains and amaranths, the gardens of the blest, the security of everlasting joys, where the sensualist and the sceptic view only gloom, decay, annihilation, and despair.[c]

5, 6. (5) bringeth down, or, hath bowed down. lofty city, Babylon is again in the Prophet's mind. (6) foot . . down, a fig. for the exultation of the Jews in the final overthrow of the city of their foes.

Pride fettered.—

Prayer is the net that snareth him; prayer is the fetter that holdeth him:

Thou canst not nourish pride while waiting as an almsman on thy God,—

Waiting in sincerity and trust, or pride shall meet thee even there:

Yea, from the palaces of Heaven hath pride cast down his millions.

Root up the mandrake from thy heart, though it cost thee blood and groans,

Or the cherished garden of thy graces will fade and perish utterly.[a]

Pride natural.—Naturalists find it much less easy to teach a mountain flower to accommodate itself to a low locality than to get one which by birth belongs to the valleys to live and thrive at a lofty elevation. So there seems nothing more difficult to men than to descend gracefully. How few who have been accustomed to a high position in society are able to reconcile themselves to a humble one! . . . So it is with us in our low and lost estate. Spiritually poor, we are spiritually proud, saying, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing;" while we are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." Even when we are in some degree sensible of our poverty, and know we cannot pay, like the unjust steward, we are ashamed to beg. Indulging a pride out of all keeping "with filthy rags," we will not stoop to stand at God's door, poor mendicants, who ask for mercy.[b]

7. uprightness, or straightness. "He walks, in intention, along the straight way of truth." weigh . . just, or make level. "Thou makest his way straight before his face."[a] Removing all obstacles.

A farmer.—A farmer called on the late Earl Fitzwilliam, to represent that his crop of wheat had been seriously injured in a field adjoining a certain wood, where his lordship's hounds had, during the winter, frequently met to hunt. He stated that the young wheat had been so cut up and destroyed, that, in some parts, he could not hope for any produce. "Well, my friend," said his lordship, "I am aware that we have frequently met in that field, and that we have done considerable injury; and if you can procure an estimate of the loss you have sustained, I will repay you." The farmer replied that, anticipating his lordship's consideration and kindness, he had requested a friend to assist him in estimating the damage, and they thought that as the crop seemed quite destroyed, £50 would not more than repay him. The earl immediately gave him the money. As the harvest, however, approached, the wheat grew, and in those parts of the field which were most trampled, the corn was strongest and most luxuriant. The farmer went again to his lordship, and being introduced, said, "I am come, my lord, respecting the field of wheat adjoining such a wood." His lordship immediately recollected the circumstance. "Well, my friend, did not I allow you sufficient to remunerate you for your loss?" "Yes, my lord, I find that I have sustained no loss at all, for where the horses had most cut up the land, the crop is most promising, and I have therefore brought the £50 back again." "Ah!" exclaimed the venerable earl, "this is what I like; this is as it should be between man and man." He then entered into conversation with the farmer, asking him some questions about his family—how many children he had, etc. His lordship then went into another room, and returning, presented the farmer with a cheque for £100, saying, "Take care of this, and when your eldest son is of age, present it to him, and tell him the occasion that produced it." We know not which to admire most—the benevolence or the wisdom displayed by this illustrious man; for, while doing a noble act of generosity, he was handing down a lesson of integrity to another generation.[b]

vidence of God, by which to return to Palestine.

v. 7. Dr. W. Craig, i. 136.

"Before men we stand as opaque bee-hives. They can see the thoughts go in and out of us, but what work they do inside of a man they cannot tell. Before God we are as glass bee-hives, and all that our thoughts are doing within us He perfectly sees and understands." —*Beecher.*

"I would be virtuous for my own sake, though nobody were to know it; as I would be clean for my own sake, though nobody were to see me." —*Shaftesbury.*

b R. T. S.

8, 9. (8) **judgments,** on national iniquity. **waited for thee,** accepting submissively the judgments and expecting the gracious return of Divine favour, when judgments had finished their work. **desire,** longing, strong yearnings for the Divine favour, and the manifestations of the Divine power and mercy. **remembrance,** better, Thy memorial.[a] (9) **in the night,** of affliction. **early,** *i.e.* earnestly. **thy judgments,** in the overthrow of the enemies of Thy people.

National judgments (*v.* 9).—It is our object to show—I. That this country has been visited by the judgments of God; it has been a scene of many and great mercies, yet the judgments of God have been abroad. Point out some of these national visitations: war, death, etc. If it be asked why, let it be remembered God has had cause for what He has been pleased to afflict. II. Consider whether, by the inhabitants of this land, a right improvement of its visitation has been made. We may allude to the state of the professing people of God, to the state of the population at large, Sabbath-breaking, profaneness. III. State the reflections by which an immediate improvement of past visitations is forcibly urged. 1. The public consequences of continued impenitence and transgression, as removal of religious

a "God's character was connoted by His Name, and was handed down in the historical memorial of His deeds of love and power." —*Spk. Com.*

v. 8. *R. Erskine,* v. 479; *Dr. J. Milner,* i. 1; *W. F. Vance,* 21.

vv. 8, 9. *V. Nelson,* 246; *Dr. H. Draper,* i. 490.

v. 9. *Bp. Brownrig,* ii. 217; *Dr. R. Whichcote,* ii. 211; *Dr. S. Clarke,* 156; *Abp. Secker,*

viii. 28; *Dr. G. Fothergill*, i. 227; *J. Spence*, 312; *H. Stebbing*, iii. 257; *G. Carr*, i. 243; *Bp. Home*, v. 243; *J. R. Boulbee*, i. 188; *W. Gilpin*, iii. 115; *H. Marriott*, 18; *Dr. A. B. Evans*, 396; *Dr. T. Chalmers*, xi. 11.

b *J. Parsons.*

James II., after his defeat at La Hogue, expressed his satisfaction thereat, because what God orders is best, and nothing is well done which is not done by Him.

"Patience and gentleness are power. — *Leigh Hunt.*

c *S. Charnock.*

a "The wrath of God, as a sudden, rapid, irresistible, and utterly destroying agent." — *J. A. Alexander.*

v. 10. *Ephraim Syrus, Op.* v. 344; *J. Bidstone*, 1.

v. 11. *Bp. Gleig*, 163.

"A good man suffers evils and does good (Ac. vii 59, 60). A natural man suffers good and doth evil (Is. xxvi. 10)."—*Sibbes.*

b *T. Watson.*

a Ps. xxx. 7; Pr. x. 7.

v. 12. *Dr. R. Hunkhouse*, iii. 135; *Dr. H. Dra-*

privileges, this the harbinger of national desolation; 2. The results of the desired amendment and repentance.[b]

Patience (*v.* 8).—Impatience will not make God break the chains of His resolves, but patience will bring down the blessing with great success, and big with noble births. God is not out of the way of His wisdom and grace, and we can never keep in our way but by patience and waiting. We many times get more good by waiting than we do by enjoying a mercy. Such a posture keeps the soul humble and believing; whereas, many times when we receive a mercy too hastily with one hand, we let go faith and humility with the other. Sincere souls have the strongest and most heavenly raptures in a time of waiting.[c] *Judgment teaching righteousness.*—Not only the Church but the world will learn two great lessons, viz., that God is righteous, and be led into the way of righteousness. In *The Hand of God in History* we read that "the devastating wars of Napoleon I. produced a shock which taught all Europe that Jehovah is the God of nations." The Emperor Alexander of Russia, who from that time to his death is believed to have been an humble follower of Jesus, once observed that "the burning of Moscow lighted the flame of religion in my soul." Professor Tholuck says that "when Germany was called to contend for freedom, this memorable event awakened religious desires in hearts that had remained strangers to every Christian sentiment. The inhabitants of Prussia felt that the moment was come for the display of the eternal justice which governs the world, and from that time the heart of the king was opened to the truths of Christianity." When cholera raged in Great Britain, thousands who never thought seriously before felt that it was high time to awake out of sleep, and turned unto the Lord.

10, 11. (10) **favour**, or mercy. To the wicked mercy seems only weakness, so he despises "goodness and forbearance." **land of uprightness**, *i.e.* the Holy Land. **behold**, or take into due consideration. (11) **lifted up**, in great national judgments. **not see**, by reason of their wilful blindness. **fire . . enemies**,[a] *i.e.* the fire with which God devours His enemies.

Affliction.—Afflictions teach us to pray better: "They poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them," Isa. xxvi. 16. Before, they would say a prayer; now "they poured out" one. Jonah was asleep in the ship, but awake and at prayer in the fish's belly. When God puts under the firebrands of affliction, then our hearts boil over the more. God loves to have His children possessed with a spirit of prayer. Never did David, the sweet singer of Israel, tune his harp more melodiously, or pray better, than when he sunk in deep waters. Thus afflictions do discipline us. Gold is not the worse for being tried: so affliction is the touchstone of sincerity; it tries what metal we are of. That is a precious faith which, like the star, shines brightest in the darkest night. It is good that our graces should be brought to a trial; thus we have the comfort, and the Gospel the honour.[b]

12—14. (12) **ordain peace**, procure, or obtain. **in us**, better, *for us.* (13) **other lords**, the idol lords of the nation to which Israel had been subject. (14) **dead**, completely destroyed.[a] The power of Babylon is quite gone.

The Ordainer of peace (*v.* 12).—I. Let us observe the Christian's

present condition. The operation—1. Is Divine; 2. Internal; 3. Manifold; 4. Acknowledged. II. We have their full expectation. 1. There is security for it; 2. The nature of the blessing, "peace." Temporal, spiritual, it often fluctuates. III. The dependence of the present condition upon the future expectation upon each other. The ground of our confidence is the Word of God, and not frames and feelings. Two sources of relief from this quarter. 1. The experience of others and of those who have gone before us; 2. Our own experience, which is nearer and more encouraging still.[b]

Peace through the Gospel.—"Some years ago," says a Belgian pastor, "I visited a gardener, and induced him to obtain a New Testament. This displeased his wife so much that she begged me one day to leave her husband alone. My wife continued to see him, and while speaking of flowers and plants she spoke of the Gospel. Although professing unbelief, he would say, 'I respect you, for you are good and sincere, but I would not allow a priest to speak to me so.' The man fell ill, and was for a long time laid up. My wife used to read the Scriptures to him. A few days before his death I went to see him, and he answered all my questions in a most touching manner. A priest, furious at his receiving my visits, threatened him with damnation. 'Let me die in peace,' he answered, 'I now believe in the Gospel.' The priest left him, and he died in peace. His widow, his son, and the whole family now attend our chapel regularly."

15—17. (15) **increased the nation**, prob. meaning the boundaries of the nation. **art glorified**, first in judgments, then in mercies.[a] **hadst . . earth**, *Alexander* trans., "Thou hast put far off all the ends of the land," and refers the clause to the extension of territory. (16) **visited thee**, sought Thee, as suppliants and penitents. **prayer**, the word used means "a low whisper," and indicates their humiliation and feebleness.[b] (17) **in thy sight**, better "at Thy presence."[c]

Encouragements to prayer.—1. Abraham's servant prays—Rebekah appears. 2. Jacob wrestles and prays—Christ is conquered. Esau's mind is wonderfully turned from the revengeful purpose he had harboured for twenty years. 3. Moses cries to God—the sea divides. 4. Moses prays—Amalek is discomfited. 5. Joshua prays—Achan is discovered. 6. Hannah prays—Samuel is born. 7. David prays—Ahithophel hangs himself. 8. Asa prays—a victory is gained. 9. Jehoshaphat cries to God—God turns away his foes. 10. Isaiah and Hezekiah pray—185,000 Assyrians are dead in twelve hours. 11. Daniel prays—the dream is revealed. 12. Daniel prays—the lions are muzzled. 13. Daniel prays—the seventy weeks are revealed. 14. Ezra prays—God answers (Ezra viii. 21—23). 15. Nehemiah darts a prayer—the king's heart is softened in a minute (Neh. ii. 6). 16. Elijah prays—a drought of three years succeeds. 17. Elijah prays—rain descends apace. 18. Elisha prays—Jordan is divided. 19. Elisha prays—a child's soul comes back. Prayer reaches eternity. 20. The Apostles pray—the Holy Ghost comes down. 21. The Church prays ardently in a prayer-meeting—Peter is delivered by an angel.[d]

Divine help sought by prayer.—For help in duty or in danger, prayer is an unfailing source of strength. When King William IV. expired at Windsor Castle about midnight, the Archbishop

per, i. 182; *H. Alford*, iii. 275.

v. 13. *R. W. Dibdin*, 191.

b W. Jay.

Christ is the Great Peacemaker, reconciling men to God. Col. i. 20. Animated by His Spirit we are to love peace and seek after peace with all men, and we are to be especially co workers with Him in restoring peace between our fellow-men and God. 2 Cor. v. 20.

a "In doing all this Thou hast made an exhibition of Thy power, justice, truth, and goodness."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Spk. Com.

c "This verse contains an image of anguish accompanied with expectation, to be followed by joy that will cause the anguish utterly to be forgotten."—*Fausset.*

v. 15. *Dr. D. Williams*, ii. 263.

d Dr. J. Campbell.

"From prayer on the mountain to His majestic walk on the stormy sea. From the mountain of prayer

did the great Captain of humanity conduct all His wars and gain all His conquests." *Lange.*

e *The Children's Hour.*

a *Henderson.*

b "Sublimely recovering himself, the Prophet cries that God's saints, though they are dead, shall live, and, with the lifeless but reanimated body of the restored exiles, shall found the kingdom of righteousness, after the present distress." — *Mat. Arnold.*

c This verse is regarded as indicating a prevalent belief in the resurrection of the dead.

rr. 18, 19. *Bp. Reynolds*, v. 363.

v. 19. *Bp. Atterbury*, i. 266; *S. E. Pierce*, 239; *J. Armstrong*, 154; *Lord A. Hervey*, i. 26.

d *Dr. Thomas.*

"Hindrances to prayer. — 1. Doubt. 2. An unforgiving spirit. 3. A worldly mind. 4. The influence of a wrong spirit within us, as uncharitableness, vanity, selfishness, etc. 5. Want of specific aim. 6. Want of direct and believing reference to Christ

of Canterbury immediately hastened to acquaint the Princess Victoria of her succession to the throne. Our beloved Sovereign was then at Kensington, and on the arrival of the prelate, before daylight, she at once hastily prepared herself for the interview. On receiving the momentous intelligence the youthful Queen became much agitated, but her first words were, "I ask your prayers on my behalf." They knelt down together, and our Queen began her reign in the spirit of Solomon of old, by imploring from the King of kings "a wise and understanding heart."*e*

18, 19. (18) **brought . . wind,** "the reference is to the futility of all the self-originating schemes and hopes of the Jews in Babylon, which had for their object their political regeneration."*a* They humbly acknowledge that deliverance did not come until God delivered. **fallen,** *i.e.* under any of our plans for their discomfiture. (19) **thy dead,** the nation proved so incapable of self-regeneration, is here called "dead," only to be awakened by the Divine touch. **my dead body,** better, "their dead bodies."*b* **thy dew,** the power quickening life and fertility. God's dew of blessing.*c* **cast . . dead,** the scattered and lost Jews fr. the various places of captivity.

A call to spiritual life and happiness (*v.* 19).—This call may be addressed to three classes of men amongst us. 1. The sensualist; 2. To the worldling; 3. To the ritualist. Conclusion: All unregenerate men are in the dust.*d*

Beautiful death scene.—When one of Martin Luther's children lay on her deathbed, the great man approached her, and said to her. "My dear little daughter, my beloved Margaret, you would willingly remain with your earthly parents; but, if God calls you, you will go with your Heavenly Father." "Yes, dear father, it is as God pleases." "Dear little girl," he exclaimed, "O how I love you! The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." He then took the Bible, and read to her the passage: "Thy dead men shall live; together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." He then said, "My daughter, enter thou into thy resting-place in peace." She turned her eyes toward him, and said, with touching simplicity, "Yes, father!"—*Note on r.* 19.—As they sometimes plant herbs and flowers above the graves of the dead, so Dr. Addison observed that the Jews of Barbary adorned the graves of their dead in a less lasting manner, with green boughs brought thither from time to time; might not this practice originate from the doctrine of the resurrection? perhaps from that well-known passage of a Prophet: "Thy dead men shall live: together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Is. xxvi. 19. Or if it was practised still earlier, might not this passage have reference to that custom? It is admitted that the practice obtained among those that entertained no expectation of a resurrection, but in the language of St. Paul, sorrowed as people that had no such hope. The ancient Greeks practised this decking the graves of their dead, but it might notwithstanding originate from that doctrine, and be adopted by those of a different belief, as having something in it softening the horrors of viewing their relatives immersed in

the dust; and might be thought to be agreeable by those that entered into medical considerations, as correcting those ill-scented and noxious exhalations that might arise in those burial places to which their women, more especially, were frequently induced to go, to express their attachment to the departed. Maillet supposes the modern Egyptians lay leaves and herbs on the graves of their friends, from a notion that this was a consolation to the dead, and believed to be refreshing to them from their shade. The women there, according to him, go "at least two days in the week to pray and weep at the sepulchres of the dead; and the custom then is to throw upon the tombs a sort of herb which the Arabs call *rihan*, and which is our sweet basil. They cover them also with the leaves of the palm tree." If they use any other plants for this purpose in Egypt, he has neglected to mention them.[e]

20, 21. (20) come, the call of God to the pious ones, in view of coming troubles. When the Prophet wrote, some time was to elapse before God's deliverance would come, so more trustful waiting on God was required. This further delay would be very trying, and so God gives this comforting message. (21) punish earth, the heathen nations that had oppressed Israel. blood,[a] Heb. *bloods: i.e.* the innocent blood shed upon it.[b]

Safety of God's people amidst the judgments on this world (*vv.* 20, 21).—We have—1. A solemn intimation of coming judgments. 2. The cause or reason of God's intending thus to act. "Iniquities," as oppression (iii. 15); pride, luxury, and effeminacy (iii. 18—23); covetousness, drunkenness, and ungodliness (v. 11, 12); Sabbath-breaking; neglect of family worship. 3. The safety of His people during the time of His judgments upon the ungodly. Take the chambers as the attributes of God.[c]

Christian security.—Faith is the Christian's foundation, and hope is his anchor, and death is his harbour, and Christ is his pilot, and heaven is his country; and all the evils of poverty, or affronts of tribunals and evil judges, of fears and sad apprehensions, are but like the loud winds blowing from the right point,—they make a noise, but drive faster to the harbour. And if we do not leave the ship, and jump into the sea; quit the interest of religion, and run into securities of the world; cut our cables, and dissolve our hopes; grow impatient; hug a wave and die in its embraces,—we are safe at sea, safer in the storm which God sends us, than in a calm when we are befriended by the world.[d]

as Mediator. 7. The absence of importunity. 8. Inconsistency of life. 9. Distraction of mind."—*John Bate.*

"The whole life of a philosopher is the meditation of his death."—*Cicero.*

e Harmer.

a Ge. iv. 11.

b "These words may be applied almost exclusively to the retribution which awaited the Chaldæan for the slaughter of God's people. . . The blood, which the earth had long since drunk in, should as it were be vomited up, and the bodies of the murdered, which had long been buried, should be now disclosed to view."—*J. A. Alexander.*

"Other sins only speak; murder shrieks out; the element of water moistens the earth; but blood flies upwards, and bedews the heavens."—*John Webster.*

c J. D. Hull, B.A.

d Bp. Taylor.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

1. that time, the period of the Medo-Persian invasion. sore, *i.e.* hard, unrelenting. sword, fig. for Jehovah's judgment.[a] leviathan,[b] the kingdom of Asshur Babel. piercing serpent,[c] or fugitive, fleet, serpent, alluding to the swift, straight river the Tigris. crooked serpent, the curved and winding river the Euphrates. dragon, the usual Bible symbol for Egypt.

The Reformation.—Then was the sacred Bible sought out of the dusty corners where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it, the schools opened, Divine and human learning raked out of

a De. xxxii. 41, 42; Is. xxxiv. 5; Eze. xxi. 3, 4, 5.

b Lit. in *Arab. the twisted animal.*

c Crossing like a bar.

See *W. Cradock, Divine Drops*, 26.

the embers of forgotten tongues, the princes and cities trooping apace to the new-erected banner of salvation: the martyrs, with the irresistible might of weakness, shaking the powers of darkness and scorning the fiery rage of the old red Dragon.[d]

2, 3. (2) day, of judgments. unto her, to the captive and afflicted Church of God. red wine, or, of delight: "the fair vineyard."[a] (3) keep it, defend, and watch over it. water . . moment, or, at moments, *i.e.* whensoever it is needing refreshment. The sign of constant care.[b] hurt it, in the coming time of commotion and calamity.

Knox and the assassin.—The celebrated Scotch reformer had many surprising escapes from the malicious designs of his enemies. He was accustomed to sit at the head of the table in his own house, with his back to the window: on one particular evening, however, he would neither himself sit in his chair, nor allow any one else to do so. That very night a bullet was shot in at the window purposely to kill him; it grazed the chair in which he usually sat, and made a hole in the foot of the candlestick.[c]

4—6. (4) fury . . me, in the sense of resentment against His people. He had chastised them, but He does not "keep His anger for ever." set . . battle,[a] *i.e.* if God's enemies resist His purposes they shall surely feel His power. go through, step against them, one step would suffice.[b] (5) or, *i.e.* or else. If any would be saved. hold . . strength, *i.e.* escape My severity by embracing My goodness. (6) take root, once again in their own land.[c]

Liberty and discipline (*vv.* 4, 5).—Here is—I. A blessed absence in the nature of God; "fury is not in Me." II. This blessed absence in the nature of God is compatible with contention with the unrepenting. Apply:—1. The absence of fury in God leads Him to prefer pardonto punishment; 2. The preference of God for peace depends upon the attribute of which the ungodly would rob Him—righteousness.[d]

The father subdued.—The Rev. R. Toller's most affecting illustrations (and the power of illustrating a subject was his distinguishing faculty) were drawn from the most familiar scenes of life; and, after he became a father, not unfrequently from the incidents which attach to that relation. An example of this will afford the reader some idea of the manner in which he availed himself of images drawn from the domestic circle. His text was, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." "I think," said he, "I can convey the meaning of this passage, so that every one may understand it, by what took place in my own family within these few days. One of my little children had committed a fault, for which I thought it my duty to chastise him. I called him to me, explained to him the evil of what he had done, and told him how grieved I was that I must punish him for it. He heard me in silence, and then rushed into my arms, and burst into tears. I could sooner have cut off my arm than have then struck him for his fault: he had taken hold of my strength, and he had made peace with me."[e]

7—9. (7) him, *i.e.* Israel, God's own people. those, Israel's enemies.[a] are slain, in the day of the Divine slaughter. (8)

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d Milton.

a Ps. lxxx. 8. Is. v. 1.

b Comp. Is. v. 6.

vv. 2, 3. *Dr. H. Draper*, iii. 130; *S. E. Pierce*, 193; *M. Jackson*, i 54; *A. Roberts*, i. 283.

v. 3. *T. Rogers*, ii. 170.

c R. T. S.

a By the briers and thorns are meant hostile powers, those who oppose themselves to God and His people.

b Spk. Com.

c "The metaphor is borrowed from the practice of horticulture, and was naturally suggested by the subject of the preceding verses."—*Henderson.*

vv. 4, 5. *J. Cotton*, 51.

v. 5. *R. Taylor*, 61.

d Dr. Bushnell.

One of the nobles of Guatimozin being laid upon a bed of burning coals, with his sovereign, complained greatly of his suffering; when Guatimozin said, "Do you think that I lie upon roses?"

e R. Hall.

a "Assyria and Babylon were left *without rem-*

in measure, better, "with measure by measure," doling it out carefully, and with precise adaptations. "Very measuredly." shooteth forth, or when thou dost send her forth into captivity. The fig. is taken from the shooting of the vine, to wh. Israel is likened. debate, so as to temper it, and qualify the very judgments. stayeth . . wind, "A simpler rendering would be. He sighed with His rough breath in the day of east wind." [b] The east wind is the Babylonian invasion. (9) this, the graciously ordered captivity. stones . . sunder, destroying all idol-symbols, as a sign of utter abandonment of idolatry.[c]

The rough wind (*v.* 8).—I. Consider the appropriateness of the figure. 1. In the power with which the winds act, do they not illustrate the great force or strength of human troubles? 2. Winds, in the time when they arise, illustrate the fact that sorrows have their appointed time; 3. Sorrows, like winds, are the servants of God. II. Consider the truth that these words suggest—that God-sent sorrows are adapted to the state and character of those who are afflicted. This will appear if you reflect—1. On their origin; 2. Their subject; 3. Observe God's wise methods in dealing with our trials. Apply:—(1) All trials are under Divine control; (2) There is a blessing in sorrow, for God is in it; (3) Trust not to ourself in sorrow; (4) Do not anticipate sorrow with the timidity of unbelief; (5) God can not only stay the rough wind, but bring an end to the day of the east wind.[d]

Wind.—Professor Airy has found that wind never blows steadily for any period of time except from eight points of the compass. When in any other quarter, it is merely shifting round to one of these points. It never blows at all directly from the south! The two most prevalent winds are the S.S.W. and W.S.W.; the one of which invariably brings rain, the other is accompanied by dry weather. Between the W. and N.W. is one point of duration; between the N. and E. another; and another between the E. and S.S.W., which with the N., the W., and the E., make the eight points alluded to.

10, 11. (10) defenced city, some refer this to Jerusalem, others to Babylon. The latter reference is to be preferred. calf feed,[a] the sign of its abandonment to desolation. "The leafage of its gardens shall be browsed by animals, or broken off for the oxen." (11) women come, the duty of gathering fuel in the East devolves on the women. The fine fruit trees would come to this sad ending. no understanding, words which describe the awfully brutish condition of the idolaters of Babylon. no favour, *i.e.* so as to limit their punishment as He did the punishment of His people.

Desolation.—Josephus describes Galilee, of which he was the governor, as "full of plantations of trees of all sorts, the soil universally rich and fruitful, and all, without the exception of a single part, cultivated by the inhabitants. Moreover," he adds, "the cities lie here very thick, and there are very many villages which are so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contained above fifteen thousand inhabitants." Such was Galilee at the commencement of the Christian era, several centuries after the prophecy was delivered; but now "the plain of Esdraelon, and all the other parts of Galilee which afford pasture, are occupied by Arab tribes, around whose brown tents

nant, not so Israel."—*Spk. Com.*

"Exile was in God's eyes a sufficient punishment for Israel, and his putting away idolatry is a sufficient title for readmission to God's favour. Not such is Babylon's punishment and end, for Babylon is 'a people of no understanding.'"—*Mat. Arnold.*

b "He winnoweth, purgeth, with His rough blast of affliction in the day of the east wind." —*Wordsworth.*

c The Jews were wholly cured of idolatry in the time of their captivity.

v. 9. *D. Clarkson*, 541.

d S. Martin.

"He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."—*L. Sterne.*

a Is. v. 17, xvii. 2, xxxii. 17.

v. 11. *E. Veal, Morn. Ex.* ii. 1; *Dr. R. South*, viii. 110; *Dr. E. Payson*, ii. 420.

"Which way shall I fly infinite wrath, and infinite despair? Which way I flee is hell. — myself am hell, and in the lowest deep, a lower deep, still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide; to which the hell I suffer seems a heav'n. . . . Is there no place left for repentance, none

for pardon left!" —*Milton.*

"Despair makes a despicable figure, and is descended from a mean original. It is the offspring of fear, laziness, and impatience. It argues a defect of spirit and resolution, and oftentimes of honesty too. After all, the exercise of this passion is so troublesome, that nothing but dint of evidence and demonstration should force it upon us. I would not despair unless I knew the irrevocable decree was passed; saw my misfortune recorded in the book of fate, and signed and sealed by necessity." — *Jeremy Collier.*

"Despondency is not a state of humility; on the contrary, it is vexation and despair of a cowardly pride, —nothing is worse; whether we stumble or whether we fall, we must only think of rising again and going on our course."— *Fénélon.*

the sheep and lambs gambol to the sound of the reed, which at nightfall calls them home." The calf feeds and lies down amid the ruins of the cities, and consumes, without hindrance, the branches of the trees; and, however changed may be the condition of the inhabitants, the lambs feed after their manner, and, while the land mourns, and the merry-hearted sigh, they gambol to the sound of the reed. The precise and complete contrast between the ancient and existing state of Palestine, as separately described by Jewish and Roman historians and by modern travellers, is so strikingly exemplified in their opposite descriptions, that, in reference to whatever constituted the beauty and the glory of the country, or the happiness of the people, an entire change is manifest, even in minute circumstances. The universal richness and fruitfulness of the soil of Galilee, together with its being "full of plantations of all sorts of trees," are represented by Josephus as "inviting the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation." And the other provinces of the Holy Land are also described by him as "having abundance of trees, full of autumnal fruit, both that which grows wild, and that which is the effect of cultivation." Tacitus relates that, besides all the fruits of Italy, the palm and balsam tree flourished in the fertile soil of Judæa. And he records the great carefulness with which, when the circulation of the juices seemed to call for it, they gently made an incision in the branches of the balsam, with a shell, or pointed stone, not venturing to apply a knife. No sign of such art or care is now to be seen throughout the land. The balm tree has disappeared where long it flourished; and hardier plants have perished from other causes than the want of due care in their cultivation. And instead of relating how the growth of a delicate tree is promoted, and the medicinal liquor at the same time extracted from its branches by a nicety or perfectibility of art worthy of the notice of a Tacitus, a different task has fallen to the lot of the traveller from a far land, who describes the customs of those who now dwell where such arts were practised. "The olive trees (near Arimathæa) are daily perishing through age, the ravages of contending factions, and even from secret mischief. The Mamelukes having cut down all the olive trees, for the pleasure they take in destroying, or to make fires. Yafahas has lost its greatest convenience." Instead of "abundance of trees" being still the effect of cultivation, such, on the other hand, has been the effect of these ravages, that many places in Palestine are now "absolutely destitute of fuel." Yet in this devastation, and all its progress, may be read the literal fulfilment of the prophecy which not only described the desolate cities of Judæa as a pasture of flocks, and as places for the calf to feed and lie down, and consume the branches thereof, but which, with equal truth, also declared, "when the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off; the women come and set them on fire."[b]

[b] *Keith.*

12, 13. (12) **beat off**, the remnant,—the remaining olive berries: or "beat out His grain," scatter His people. Or, sift His scattered people, bringing the elect remnant back to their own land.[a] (13) **trumpet**, the proclamation of liberty to all who had been under the sway of the Babylonian and Egyptian kings. "Such proclamations were made by Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, etc." **Egypt**, to wh. country many had fled in the time of the captivity.

[a] "God's threshing-floor would be a vast one, wherever Israel was scattered, from the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt." —*Wordsworth.*

The Gospel trumpet (*v.* 13).—I. The persons for whose benefit the great trumpet shall be blown. 1. Transgressors; 2. Impure; 3. Exposed to the wrath of God; 4. Ready to perish; 5. Helpless. II. The gracious remedy the great trumpet announces. 1. The mission of Christ; 2. The remission of debts; 3. A great feast; 4. Restoration of forfeited possessions. III. The instrumentality of the Gospel dispensation. 1. It is necessary for the trumpet to be blown; 2. It is the will of God that it should be blown: 3. It was first blown by angels; 4. It is to be blown by men. IV. Its powerful influence. 1. They shall come; 2. They shall come into His church to worship and serve God; 3. They shall be glorified by Christ at the day of judgment.[b]—*The great trumpet blown* (*v.* 13).—I. The interesting comparison. Gospel compared to great trumpet, because—1. It is designed to arrest universal attention; 2. To proclaim a new era; 3. To declare a war: 4. To gather an assembly. II. The distressing condition—1. Of unconverted: captive in Assyria, outcast in Egypt: 2. Power of Jesus to save to the uttermost. III. The glorious recovery—1. To a spiritual and pure worship; 2. To an illustrious companionship; 3. To an eternal home.

Rev. Dr. Waugh.—The following pleasing occurrence was related by a zealous missionary to the heathen:—On the 13th of April, 1814, the late Rev. Dr. Waugh preached at Bridport. His text was, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem" (Isa. xxvii. 13). The words "ready to perish" furnished him with solemn, awful, melting views of the miserable condition of the heathen. The "blowing of the great trumpet" drew forth every feeling of his mighty mind. He did blow it, indeed, with power and sweetness too. It was the trumpet of the Gospel. It suited him. He loved it. It was sweet melody from his lips. It proclaimed salvation! After expatiating for some time on this particular, he raised his voice with uncommon energy; his eyes flashed fire as he spake; he seemed as if he would have sprung over the pulpit to his auditors, while he exclaimed, "We want men of God to blow this great trumpet to the heathen, and we must have them! The heathen are 'ready to perish;' and they will perish, if the great trumpet does not bring them the joyful sound. I say again, we want men of God to blow this great trumpet, and we must have them!" Then, after this peal of thunder, he paused, and, in a softened melting tone, inquired, "Is there not one young disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ present who has love enough in his heart to his Divine Master to volunteer his services, and to say, 'I will go!'" This word reached my heart; it penetrated my inmost soul. I silently said, "Yes, Lord, if Thou wilt help me, I will go. There is not in this congregation a greater debtor to mercy; and perhaps there is not one present who has more ardently longed to be engaged in missionary work. If Thou wilt accept me, O Lord, I will go."

"Under the fig of sifting corn is announced the final collection and restoration of all the true Israel, however outcast and scattered."—*Mat. Arnold.*

v. 13. *R. Erskine*, vi. 318; *Dr. Young*, 3; *B. Beddome*, 6.

b Pulpit Themes.

"To preach practical sermons, as they are called, that is, sermons upon virtues and vices, without inculcating those great Scripture truths of redemption, grace, etc., which alone can incite and enable us to forsake sin and follow righteousness—what is it but to put together the wheels, and set the hands of a watch, forgetting the spring, which is to make them all go?"—*Bp. Horne.*

"I remember one of my parishioners at Halesworth telling me that he thought 'a person should not go to church to be made uncomfortable.' I replied that I thought so too; but whether it should be the sermon or the man's life that should be altered so as to avoid the discomfort, must depend on whether the doctrine was right or wrong."—*Abp. Whately.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

1, 2. (1) woe to, or, *alas for.* crown of pride, with reference to the natural beauty of the situation of Samaria, like a

"The proud crown of the drunkards of

Ephraim."—*Horsley.*

a For refs. to Samaria see 1 Ki. xvi. 24; Am. iii. 9, iv. 1, vi. 1. "Samaria was built on a beautiful fruitful hill, strong by nature, from its insulated situation in the middle of a deep and broad valley, and rendered still more so by the fortifications that were erected for its defence."—*Henderson.*

b Eze. xxx. 24. Samaria was taken by Shalmaneser, about B.C. 721.

c Spk. Com.

royal diadem of Israel," **drunkards**, *i.e.* the vicious population, named after their one characteristic sinful indulgence. **glorious . . flower**, better, "and the fading flower of their glorious beauty." **fat valleys**, the richly cultivated districts round Samaria. (2) **the Lord**, Heb. *Adonai.* **strong one**, or instrument for executing His vengeance. Ref. is to the king of Assyria.[b] **cast . . hand**, "laid his hand on both crown and garland, and flung them to the ground."[c]

Samaria.—The city of Sebaste, the ancient Samaria, beautifully situated on the top of a round hill, and surrounded immediately with a rich valley and a circle of other hills beyond it, suggested the idea of a chaplet, or wreath of flowers, worn upon their heads on occasions of festivity: expressed by the proud crown and the fading flower of the drunkards. That this custom of wearing chaplets in their banquets prevailed among the Jews, as well as among the Greeks and Romans, appears from Wisdom ii. 7, 8.

3, 4. (3) **trodden under feet**, or, with feet. The fig. of the city as a garland on the drunken at feasts is carried on. (4) **fading flower**, a withering garland. **hasty fruit**, the early fig that ripens in June is esteemed a delicacy, but it very readily drops from the tree,[a] **eateth it**, swalloweth greedily, not thinking of preserving it, only of at once enjoying it.[b] The idea expressed is that Samaria, when taken, would be instantly destroyed.

Life a spring.—Let us look at spring as the emblem of human life. The Bible so regards it. "He cometh up like a flower," etc. First. Both in spring and human life there are vast capabilities of improvement. Spring is the season when Providence submits to the agriculturist what sort of harvest he shall have. With skill and industry he may, during the spring days, make nature yield him wonderful results. The cloud, the sky, the dew, the shower, the soil of spring, have special powers for the future. So is human life. Out of the human soul now seraphic powers, and forms, and faculties may grow. Secondly. Both in spring and human life there is remarkable changeability. No season so changeable as spring; alternate cloud and sunshine, storm and calm, cold and heat, "make up the April day." What an emblem of human life! What a scene of vicissitudes! Thirdly. Both in spring and human life there are many fallacious promises. Spring is the season of promise. The rich bud and blossom of fruit trees, the strong green stalks of the cornfields, have often created bright hopes, which in autumn have been terribly disappointed. So in life. Look at youth, etc. Fourthly. Both in spring and human life there is nothing can substitute for the present. No other season can do the work of spring. The man who neglects his field in the spring may toil on it to the utmost in summer without effect. So it is with life. There is no period that can be substituted for the present.[c]

a "The regular season for ingathering of figs is from Aug. to Nov., so that a ripe fig in June is regarded as a rarity, and eaten with the greater relish. . . The immediate eating of the fruit is only mentioned as a sign of eagerness or greediness."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b "As soon as he has got it into his hand, he can't keep it there to look at, or forbear eating it, but greedily devours it and swallows it down at once."—*Gill.*

vv. 4, 5. *E. Scobell*, ii. 207.

c Dr. Thomas.

5, 6. (5) **that day**, of the destruction of Samaria, and deportation of the people of the Ten Tribes. **residue**, *i.e.* to the kingdom of Judah. With prob. ref. to the prosperous times of Hezekiah. (6) **sitteth in judgment**, the king, and all magistrates, should receive from God wisdom for ruling and judging. **turn . . gate**,[a] God would be also with the armies

a "To the gate, *i.e.*, of the enemy; not only repelling his attack in Judæa, but driving him back into his own for-

"The two great requisites of civil government are here described as coming from Jehovah."[b]

Legend of the crown.—St. Catherine of Sienna, that her virtue and her sanctity might be fully manifested, was persecuted and vilified by certain envious and idle nuns of the convent of St. Dominic, among whom a Sister Palmerina was especially malignant; and these insisted that her visions were merely dreams, and that all her charitable actions proceeded from vainglory. She laid her wrongs, weeping, at the feet of Christ. He appeared to her, bearing in one hand a crown of gold and jewels, in the other a crown of thorns, and bade her choose between them. She took from His hand the crown of thorns, and placed it on her own head; pressing it down hastily, and with such force, that the thorns penetrated to her brain, and she cried out with the agony. Palmerina afterwards repented, and, falling at the feet of Catherine, begged her forgiveness, which was immediately granted.[c]

7, 8. (7) **they,** the residue, the people of Judah. **through wine,**[a] not merely through habits of drinking. Wine is taken here as the symbol of self-will and self-indulgence. Illus. of the condition described may be found in the reign of Manasseh. **have erred,** *see* Le. x. 1—9. **err in vision,** rendering themselves incapable of receiving Divine communications. (8) **vomit,** the sign of rioting and greediness. The revolting consequences of excess.

The guilt of intemperance (*vv.* 7, 8).—Permit me to remind you—I. That drunkenness is a crime against reason. II. It is a crime against the family. III. It is a crime against society, by transgressing its laws, by offending its propriety, by injuring its reputation, by the influence of an evil example. IV. Against Revelation.[b]

Drunkenness.—It is not so much the money that drunkenness wastes as the misery it produces—the domestic, temporal, and eternal misery—which most of all appals us. As to the expense of this vice, great as it is, that we least deplore; for the loss of money, we hate it least. On the contrary, we should be content were the money and the vice to perish together. We should be content to pay that hundred million as yearly tribute, would this enemy to God and man, this foe to our peace and piety, leave these shores. We wish to keep, and were it possible to get back, something far more precious than money. Give that mother back her son, as he was on the day when he returned from his father's grave, and in all the affection of his uncorrupted boyhood, walked to the house of God with a widowed weeping woman leaning on his arm. Give that grieved man back his brother as innocent and happy as in those days when the boys, twined in each other's arms, returned from school, bent over the same Bible, slept in the same bed, and never thought that the day would come when brother should blush for brother. Give this weeping wife, who sits before us wringing her hands in agony, the tears dripping through her jewelled fingers, and the lines of sorrow prematurely drawn on her beautiful brow; give her back the man she loved, such as he was when her young heart was won, when they stood side by side on the nuptial day, and receiving her from a fond father's hands, he promised his love to one whose heart he has broken, and whose once graceful

tifications." —*Henderson.*

"Turn back war *at the gate; i.e.* war which has advanced even up to the gate of the besieged city."—*Spk. Com.*

b J. A. Alexander.

vv. 5. *W. Dunlop,* ii. 484; *Bp. Vidal,* 358.

vv. 5, 6. *Abp. Leighton,* iii. 112; *Dr. T. M'Crie,* 304.

c Mrs. Jameson.

a "How fearfully the vice of drunkenness had spread is seen from the fact that even priests and prophets were addicted to it, and that not only in their private life, but they even performed their official functions in a state of intoxication."—*Nägelsbach.*

b W. Spencer.

"Not only has Solomon, in his wisdom, pointed out the evils which attend those who tarry long at the wine, but all the precepts and denunciations against drunkenness, all the details of the flagitious arts penetrated under its influence, which are recorded in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, are directed against the inordinate drinkers of wine. It is needless to say more respecting them, but refer them to that Sacred Volume, with the hope

that it may guide them to salutary contrition and penitential sorrow.'—*Hodgson.*

c *Guthrie.*

form now bends with sorrow to the ground. Give me back, as a man, the friends of my youthful days, whose wrecks now lie thick on this wreck-strewn shore. Relieve us of the fears that lie heavy on our hearts for the character and the souls of some who hold parley with the devil by this forbidden tree, and are floating on the outer edge of that great gulf-stream, which sweeps its victims onwards to most woful ruin. Could this be done, we would not talk of money. The hundred millions which drink costs this land is not to be weighed or even mentioned with this. Hearts are broken which no money can heal. Rachel is "weeping for her children," refusing to be comforted.[c]

9—11. (9) **whom,** *etc.*, so thoroughly are the men abandoned to their sins, that God must turn to the very infants as the only ones likely to heed His teachings.[a] **doctrine,** or, God's message. **weaned,** indicating the infant, only at most three years old. (10) **precept,** *etc.*,[b] this had been the characteristic of the Prophet's teachings. Again and again he had pleaded for the claims of Jehovah, adapting himself to the condition and capabilities of the people. **line,** or rule, referring to the simple sentences in which Isaiah had put his message. (11) **stammering,** hesitation of speech; produced by depth of feeling. **another tongue,**[c] *i.e.* with the use of strange and bold figures and metaphors.

The precept, the line, and the little (*v.* 10).—I. The lesson of the precept is in order that we may be right and do right. II. The lesson of the line is in order that we may be right and do right; we must try over and over again. III. The lesson of the little is that we must not be discouraged if we do not make great advances.[d]

"*Here a little, and there a little.*"—A friend called on Michael Angelo, who was finishing a statue. Some time afterwards he called again; the sculptor was still at his work. His friend, looking at the figure, exclaimed, "You have been idle since I saw you last!" "By no means," replied the sculptor: "I have retouched this part, and polished that: I have softened this feature, and brought out this muscle; I have given more expression to this lip, and more energy to this limb." "Well, well," said his friend, "but all these are trifles." "It may be so," replied Angelo; "but recollect that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle."—*David Saunders.*—In conversation with Dr. Stenhouse, David Saunders, who is well known as the subject of Mrs. Hannah More's beautiful tract, *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, gave the following narrative of facts concerning himself: "Blessed be God; through His mercy I learned to read when I was a boy. I believe there is no day, for the last thirty years, that I have not peeped at my Bible. If we can't find time to read a chapter, I defy any man to say he can't find time to read a verse; and a single text, well followed and put in practice every day, would make no bad figure at the year's end: 365 texts, without the loss of a moment's time, would make a pretty stock, a little golden treasury, as one may say, from new year's day to new year's day; and if children were brought up to it, they would come to look for their text as naturally as they do for their breakfast. I can say the greatest part of the Bible by heart. I have led but a lonely life, and have often had but little to eat; but my Bible has been meat, drink, and company to me;

a Some take these words to be the taunting of God's servant by these drunken priests and prophets. As if they said, 'Who can he teach with his childish prattle? This suggestion originated with *Lowth*, and has been accepted by later writers.—*S. Cox* skilfully expounds it.

b Heb. "Tsav la-tsav, tsav la-tsav; Kav la-kav, kav la-kav; zeeir sham, zeeir sham."

c Some refer this to the Assyrians, as people of another tongue, by whom they should be punished.

v 9. *E. Millar*, 207.

vv. 9, 10. *S. Hodson*, 35.

d *H.* in *Preacher's Lantern.*

"As light to the sun, as the heart to the body, as weight to the hammer, as the foundation to the building, as point to the spear, as edge to the sword, as fruitfulness to the tree, so is Christ in preaching; and preaching without Christ can no more enlighten the world than the sun without light, etc., etc."—*John Bate.*

and when want and trouble have come upon me, I don't know what I should have done, indeed. if I had not had the promises of this book for my stay and support."[e]

12, 13. (12) **this . . rest,** obedience to Jehovah is the only condition of prosperity and peace. (13) **was,** better, shall be. **precept,** *etc.*, *v.* 10. **might go,** or go on, blindly following their own devices, and scorning the simple but gracious Divine messages until their ruin comes.[a]

Repeat the impression.—"Children are so unstable." How often do teachers say this as a reason for discouragement! But children are children. Their purposes are not fixed. Most children act impulsively. If you work with children, you must not expect that a religious experience will change them to premature men and women. If you have made a deep impression on a child, do not think that you can come and find it as fresh as ever after a week's excitement. Continuity is what a child lacks. If you have made an impression on a child's mind in any direction, repeat it. Keep repeating it until it is habitual. Do not be disheartened. Above all, do not dishearten your pupils.

14, 15. (14) **scornful,** Ps. i. 1; Pr. xxix. 8; daring, reckless men, who can mock at the Divine messengers. (15) **said,** by your conduct, if not in actual words. **covenant with death,** *etc.*, boasting that they could take care of themselves, and heeded none of the Prophet's threats.[a] **scourge,** the invasion of the Assyrian army, like a mighty flood.

Mr. Whitefield.—An extraordinary attestation to the excellence of Mr. Whitefield as a preacher was furnished by Hume, the historian, well known for his infidelity. An intimate friend having asked him what he thought of Mr. Whitefield's preaching, "He is, sir," said Mr. Hume, "the most ingenious preacher I ever heard: it is worth while to go twenty miles to hear him." He then repeated the following passage, which occurred towards the close of the discourse he had been hearing: "After a solemn pause, Mr. Whitefield thus addressed his numerous audience: 'The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold, and ascend to heaven. And shall he ascend, and not bear with him the news of one sinner, among all this multitude, reclaimed from the error of his ways?' To give the greater effect to this exclamation, he stamped with his foot, lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven, and with gushing tears, cried aloud, 'Stop, Gabriel! Stop, Gabriel! Stop, ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God.' He then, in the most simple but energetic language, described what he called a Saviour's dying love to sinful man, so that almost the whole assembly melted into tears. This address was accompanied with such animated yet natural action that it surpassed anything I ever saw or heard in any other preacher." Happy had it been for Mr. Hume if he had received the doctrine, as well as admired the manner, of the preacher! But the pride of a false philosophy steeled his heart against the truth, and thus prevented his yielding to its converting and sanctifying influence.[b]

16, 17. (16) **a stone,** evidently with future reference to the Messiah.[a] **tried stone,** one that has stood many, and can stand every test.[b] **corner stone,** the foundations of the Temple are and were chiefly at one corner. **sure,** trustworthy, or abiding.

e R. T. S.

a "They may despise the instruction given to them as puerile, but they shall have no other: and being thus left to act according to the dictates of their own supposed wisdom, they must utterly perish." — *Henderson.*
1 Pe. ii. 8; Mat. xxiii. 37.
v. 12. *F. Wrangham*, i. 285; *J. Russel*, 324; *J. Milner*, iii. 471.

a "Their foundation (and confidence) was their falsehood and deceit, by the aid of which they hoped that they would have nothing to fear from death and Hades."—*Nägelsbach.*

"They thought themselves as sure of their lives, even when the most destroying judgments were abroad, as if they had made a bargain with Death, upon a valuable consideration, not to come till they sent for him."—*Mat. Henry.*

v. 14. *F. D. Maurice*, 114; *W. Cradock*, 33.

b R. T. S.

a Ps. cxviii. 22; Mat. xxi. 42; Ac. iv. 11; Ro. ix. 33, x. 11; 1 Pe. ii. 6, 7, 8.

believeth, relies on the covenant of Jehovah. symbolised in this Zion-foundation. make haste, as if in fear, when the judgments come. He knows that even if the Temple be shaken down, the Foundation will stand. (17) to the line . . plummet, *i.e.* to test the fitness and worth of each stone: proving the elect, and sweeping away the sinner.

The sure Foundation (*vv.* 16, 17).—I. God has Himself laid the foundation for human happiness. II. He calls men to build their hopes upon that Foundation alone. III. Nevertheless men neglect that Foundation in favour of inventions and devices of the world. IV. God will critically and exactly try every man's foundation and superstructure. V. The issue will be in one case entire ruin, and in the other triumphant to every believer. —*Soul-confidence* (*v.* 16).—A man who believes will not make haste—1. To seek security from danger; 2. To form precipitate judgments as to God's providential government: 3. To realise the perfection of the Christian life; 4. To be discouraged by apparently unsuccessful life.[c]—*The corner stone.*—I remark—I. That a great difference exists between a mere general dependence on Christ, and a conscious, intimate life with Him. II. That this intimate, daily life with Him is the great aim of the Gospel. III. That men, and wise men too, deem it impossible and delusive for a mortal man to live by faith in an invisible Being, and thus enjoy communion with Him. IV. That the Saviour is very precious to His followers as their hope and foundation.[d]

Note on v. 16.—Every promise is dated, but with a mysterious character: and for want of skill in God's chronology, we are prone to think God forgets us, when, indeed, we forget ourselves, in being so bold to set God a time of our own, and in being angry that He comes not just then to us. We are over-greedy of comfort, and expect the promise should keep time with our own hasty desires, which, because it doth not, we are discontented. A high piece of folly! The sun will not go faster, for setting our watch forward; nor the promise come the sooner, for our attending it. God seldom comes at our day, because we seldom reckon right, yet He never fails His own day.[e]

18—20. (18) covenant, *v.* 15. disannulled, obliterated, as the writing on a wax tablet is wiped out. (19) from the time, or whenever it goes forth. it will seize you. the report, what then will it be to bear the burden of the woe? (20) bed, *etc.*, the figure of the delusion in wh. they were trusting. A kind of proverb applied to their case. In the time of need all their resources should fail them.[a]

Proposed schemes of national education examined (*v.* 20).—I. Some new theories of education: a distinction is held to exist between a good moral education and a religious one. Amongst the arguments are—1. The motive of self-gratification; 2. The internal fitness and beauty of virtue; 3. A regard to the general good; 4. Influence of public opinion: 5. The influence of law. II. Contrast with these the power and efficacy of Christian means. 1. For promoting the morality of young people, or educating youth, we give them the Bible: 2. We try to bring them into the enjoyment of Christian privileges; 3. We bring them under the influence of religious ordinances.[b]

"The fig. is taken fr. the foundations of Sol.'s temple, 'the remains of which have been preserved to the present day, and appear *almost indestructible*. . . . Through all these great and various demolitions and restorations on the surface, its foundations, with their gigantic walls (for the most part unseen), have been indestructibly preserved."—*Ewald.*

b "Or, a stone of trial; one that tests everything laid upon it."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 16. *S. Warren*, 1; *Dr. V. Knox*, vi. 370; *W. Dealtry*, 42; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iii. 135.

vv. 16, 17. *S. Davies*, ii. 23.

c The Study.

d H. W. Beecher.

e Gurnall (1670).

a "They flattered themselves that they had prepared an easy and secure couch to slumber upon; their carnal wisdom and Pharisaic righteousness—how miserably insufficient should it prove."—*Spk. Com.*

"Those that do not build upon Christ as their foundation, but rest in a righteousness of their own, will prove in the end thus to have deceived

Education by the State.—

O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation on her part to teach
Them who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself, by statute, to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains,
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth,
Both understood and practised—so that none,
However destitute, be left to droop,
By timely culture unsustain'd; or run
Into a wild disorder; or be forced
To drudge through a weary life without the help
Of intellectual implements and tools;
A savage horde among the civilised,
A servile band among the lordly free.[c]

21, 22. (21) Perazim, *see* 1 Chr. xiv. 11.[a] Gibeon, *see* 1 Chr. xiv. 17. strange work, of severe and desolating chastisement. (22) be ye not, appealing to all who might still be willing to hear the Prophet's voice. consumption, burning up. Da. ix. 27.

His strange work (*v.* 21).—I. It was strange there should be occasion for the work. II. It was strange because foreign to His heart. III. It was strange on account of the method He adopted. IV. It was strange because unusual. V. It was strange, for it excited wonder on all hands.[b]

View from Neby Samwil.—The mosque of Neby Samwil stands about 600 feet over the plain of Gibeon. The building has all the marks of having been a Christian church, probably at the time of the Crusaders. The transept and chancel, though somewhat distorted by Moslem innovations, can be distinctly traced. Attached to the south end of the transept is the so-called Tomb of Samuel. This is usually shut to Jew and Christian, but a silver key, and a little quiet persuasion, induced the attendant to admit us to this enclosure. I expected to see some remains of Christian architecture, but found nothing but plain bare walls with a raised tomb in the centre covered with a coarse green cloth. The real tomb is said to be in a vault below, but to that we could not get access. Attached to the wing of the building is a tall minaret, which we ascended, and the view from which it is scarcely possible to describe. It may be said to take in the whole physical aspect of Palestine, and form a small epitome of Biblical history. This hill is not much higher than Mount Olivet, but from its situation commands a more extensive view of the country. With the aid of a binocular glass we could see to the east distinct objects along the mountains of Moab, and the intervening wilderness of Judæa, and the domes and minarets of Jerusalem; and on the west trace the coast of the Mediterranean, and see the vessels moving on its waters. To the south the view extended over Bethlehem, and the mountains that encompass Hebron; and to the north the hills of Galilee were seen vanishing into the blue ridge of Mount Carmel. I know no portion of the globe to be compared to this. It has a character entirely its

themselves; they can never be easy, safe, nor warm: the bed is too short, the covering too narrow."—*Mat. Henry.*

b J. McLean.

"I call, therefore, a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war."—*John Milton.*

c Wordsworth.

a See also 2 Sa. v. 18–24.

b Stems and Twigs.

Mercy is God's right hand, that He is most used to. Wrath is called God's "strange work"—He is unused to it.

"This labour and sweat of our brow is so far from being a curse, that without it our very bread would not be so great a blessing. Is it not labour that makes the garlick and the pulse, the sycamore and the cresses, the cheese of the goats and the butter of the sheep, to be savoury and pleasant as the flesh of a roebuck, or the milk of the kine, the marrow of oxen, or the thighs of birds? If it were not for labour, men neither could eat so much, nor relish so pleasantly, nor sleep so soundly, nor be so healthful, nor so useful, so strong nor so pa-

tient, so noble nor so untempted."—*Bp. Taylor.*
c Leisure Hour.

a "The general idea of the parable is this. The whole world is the field of the Divine Husbandman. He plants it with different kinds of crops, each of which is treated with a tillage and culture fitted to it. He does each of His works of moral and spiritual agriculture in its proper season; and all the world will be His threshing-floor, in which each kind of grain will be dealt with in a manner suited to its character."—*Wordsworth.*

b Homilist.

"Ah! if thy fate, with anguish fraught, should be to wet the dusty soil with the hot burning tears of toil,—to struggle with imperious thought, until the overburthened brain, heavy with labour, faint with pain, like a arrel pendulum, retain only its emotion, not its power; remember, in that perilous hour, when most afflicted and oppress, from labour there shall come forth rest."—*Longfellow.*

"An honest statesman to a cedar planted by a spring, which

own. As far as the eye can reach, it is one continued scene of rough and barren undulations, as if the waves of a mighty ocean had been arrested in their progress from north to south.[c]

23—25. (23) **hearken**, with attention, and the endeavour to understand a parable.[a] (24) **all day**, or all the time. Does the preparatory process go on for ever? (25) **fitches**, anise; the *Nigella sativa*: the *dill*. **cummin**, *Cuminum sativum*: cultivated for its aromatic seeds. **rie**, or spelt, so called from the shorn and smooth appearance of its ears. **place**, or border. Each kind of seed is treated appropriately.

Physical husbandry the effect and emblem of Divine teaching (v. 23).—I. That physical husbandry is the effect of Divine teaching—all true secular ideas, as well as spiritual, are from God. 1. This suggested by *à priori* reasoning; 2. Sustained by Scripture; 3. Implied in the doctrine of Providence. II. Physical husbandry is the emblem of Divine teaching. 1. Moral fruitfulness is the great end of God's dealings with man; 2. To realise this end, God employs a great variety of instrumentalities. Conclusion:—Divinity of life: man the organ of Divine thought, and the object of Divine operation.[b]

Husbandry.—The method of thrashing out the grain varied according to the species. Isaiah mentions four different instruments, the flail, the drag, the wain, and the feet of the ox. The staff, or flail, was used for the smaller seeds, which were too tender to be treated in the other methods. The drag consisted of a sort of strong planks, made rough at the bottom with hard stones or iron; it was drawn by oxen, or horses, over the corn-sheaves spread on the floor, the driver sitting upon it. The wain, or cart, was much like the former, but had wheels, with iron teeth or edges like a saw. From the statement of different authors, it would seem that the axle was armed with iron teeth, or serrated wheels throughout. Niebuhr gives a description and print of such a machine, used at present in Egypt for the same purpose; it moves upon three rollers, armed with iron teeth or wheels to cut the straw. In Syria, they make use of the drag, constructed in the very same manner as before described. This not only forced out the grain, but also cut the straw in pieces, which is used in this state over all the East as fodder for the cattle. Virgil also mentions the slow rolling wains of the Eleusinian mother, the planks and sleds for pressing out the corn, and harrows of unwieldy weight. The Israelitish farmer, endowed with discretion from above, made use of all these instruments in separating from the chaff the various produce of his fields: "For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not thrashed with a thrashing instrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin: but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread-corn is bruised: because he will not ever be thrashing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." In the early periods of the Jewish commonwealth, however, these various methods, adapted to the different kinds of grain, were unknown; the husbandman employed the staff, or flail, in thrashing all his crop. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he found him thrashing wheat by the wine-press with a staff, for so the

original term signifies ; and after Ruth had gleaned in the field till the evening, she beat out with a staff what she had gleaned. The Seventy render the verb in both passages by the Greek word = to beat with a rod : but the natural sagacity of the human mind, directed by the finger of God, at last invented the other more efficacious implements to which Isaiah so frequently refers in the course of his writings. He compares Moab, in the day of their overthrow, to straw which is trodden down under the wain : and he promises to furnish his oppressed people with the same powerful instrument, which we translate a new sharp thrashing instrument having teeth, that they may thrash the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff ; or, dropping the metaphor, he promises them complete victory over their numerous and powerful enemies, who should be given by the Lord of Hosts as driven stubble to their bow, and swept away before the armies of Israel as chaff before the whirlwinds of the south.[c]

26, 27. (26) **discretion,** for the adaptation of treatment. (27) **fitches . . staff,** bec. the seeds are readily detached from the seed-pods. **rod,** stronger than the staff, bec. the seed-pods of cummin are harder.

Reason and faith.—

Stoop, stoop, proud man ! the gate of heaven is low,
And all who enter in thereat must bend !
Reason has fields to play in, wide as air,
But they have bounds ; and if she soar beyond,
Lo ! there are lightnings and the curse of God,
And the old thundered "Never !" from the jaws
Of the black darkness and the mocking waste.
Come not to God with questions on thy lips,
He will have love—love and a holy trust,
And the self-abnegation of a child.
'Tis a far higher wisdom to believe,
Than to cry "Question" at the porch of truth.
Think not the Infinite will calmly brook
The plummet of the finite in its deeps.[a]

28, 29. (28) **bread . . bruised,** or crushed in the mill : therefore it is not bruised in the threshing process. **break it,** wh. would injure and soil the flowery contents of the corn-seed. **horsemen,** wheat being in danger from the sharp hoofs. (29) **this also,** the treatment of the seeds when ripe.[a]

The wonderfulness of God's counsel (*v.* 29).—I. Its nature is wonderful—reconciliation. II. Its formation is wonderful. 1. Its gradualness ; 2. Its instruments. III. Its propagation is wonderful. 1. The character of those to whom its propagation was first entrusted ; 2. The class to whom it was first offered ; 3. The pressing of it on those who frequently reject it.[b]

Divine providence.—Mr. John Craig, a distinguished minister, and colleague of Knox, having gone to reside in Bologna, in a convent of Dominicans, found a copy of Calvin's *Institutions*, which God made the means of his conversion to the reformed faith. He was seized as a heretic soon after, and carried to Rome, where he was condemned to be burnt ; but on the evening preceding the day of execution, the reigning pontiff died, and according to custom, the doors of all the prisons were thrown open,

bathes its root,—the grateful tree rewards it with the shadow."—*Webster.*

Co-worker in Christ ! be content to sow little seeds for Him ; be patient to wait a long time for their growing ; be strong to endure much opposition ; be hopeful, expecting sublime fruitage ; these are the chief lessons of the parables of the seed and the leaven.

c Paxton.

"Idleness is the grand pacific ocean of life, and in that stagnant abyss, the most salutary things produce no good, the most noxious no evil. Vice, indeed, abstractedly considered, may be, and often is, engendered in idleness, but the moment it becomes efficient ly vice, it must quit its cradle and cease to be idle." —*C. Colton.*

a J. S. Bigg.

a "His judgments are usually in the line of our offences ; by the nature of the judgment we may usually ascertain the nature of the sin." —*Barnes.*

"God's government of the world comprehends the minutest attention to detail with an all-comprehending unity of design."—*Spk. Com.*

"The practical idea conveyed is, that God mingles mercy with His

judgments."—*Henderson.*

rv. 27–29. *R. P. Buddicom*, i. 138; *Dr. J. Leland*, ii. 249.

b Homilist.

The London bakers, in their answers to the questions put to them by a Committee of the House of Commons, in England, appointed during the scarcity of the year 1801, to devise means of affording relief, asserted that three stale loaves were equal to five fresh ones.

c Whitecross.

"None so little enjoy life, and are such burdens to themselves, as those who have nothing to do. The active only have the true relish of life. He who knows not what it is to labour, knows not what it is to enjoy. Recreation is only valuable as it unbends us; the idle know nothing of it. It is exertion that renders rest delightful, and sleep sweet and undisturbed. That the happiness of life depends on the regular prosecution of some laudable purpose or lawful calling, which engages, helps, enlivens all our powers, let those bear witness who, after spending years in active usefulness, retire to enjoy themselves, they are a burden to themselves."—*Joy.*

a Harmer.

All others were released; but heretics, after being permitted to go outside the walls, were reconducted to their cells. That night, however, a tumult was excited, and Craig and his companions escaped. They had entered a small inn at some distance from Rome, when they were overtaken by a party of soldiers sent to recapture them. On entering the house, the captain looked Craig steadfastly in the face, and asked him if he remembered having once relieved a poor wounded soldier in the neighbourhood of Bologna. Craig had forgotten it. "But," said the captain, "I am the man; I shall requite your kindness: you are at liberty: your companions I must take with me, but for your sake I shall treat them with all possible lenity." He gave him all the money he had, and Craig escaped. But his money soon failed him: yet God, who feedeth the ravens, did not. Lying at the side of a wood, full of gloomy apprehensions, a dog came running up to him with a purse in its teeth. Suspecting some evil, he attempted to drive the animal away, but in vain. He at length took the purse, and found in it a sum of money, which carried him to Vienna.[c]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

1, 2. (1) Ariel, a symbolic name for Jerusalem. Word prob. means, the *hearth*, or *altar* of God. This best fits the reference to "sacrifices." kill sacrifices, keeping up the yearly round of feasts: the outward sign of obedience. (2) as Ariel, or a very Ariel, a real altar-hearth, where many will be consumed.

Note on v. 1.—The numbers that assembled at Jerusalem must of course consume great quantities of provision. The consumption of flesh also must there have been much larger, in proportion to the number of the people, than elsewhere: because in the East they live in common very much on vegetables, farinaccous food, oil, honey, etc.; but at Jerusalem vast quantities of flesh were consumed in the sacred feasts, as well as burnt upon the altar. Perhaps this circumstance will best explain the holy city's being called Ariel, or the Lion of God. Isaiah xxix. 1: an appellation which has occasioned a variety of speculation among the learned. Vitringa, in his celebrated *Commentary on Isaiah*, supposes that David, according to the Eastern custom, was called the Lion of God, and so this city was called by this name from him: a resolution by no means natural. The Arabs, indeed, in later ages, have often called their great men by this honourable term; D'Herbelot, I think, somewhere tells us, that Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law, was so called: and I am sure he affirms, that Mohammed gave this title to Hamzah, his uncle. It will be readily allowed that this was conformable to the taste of much more ancient times. "The modern Persians will have it," says D'Herbelot, in his account of Shiraz, a city of that country, "that this name was given to it, because this city consumes and devours like a lion, which is called *Sheer* in Persian, all that is brought to it, by which they express the multitude, and it may be the good appetite, of its inhabitants." The Prophet then pronounces woe to Zion, perhaps as too ready to trust to the number of its inhabitants and sojourners, which may be insinuated by this term which he uses, Ariel.[a]

3, 4. (3) a mount, for the battering-rams. But the word may mean a body of troops. forts, or entrenchments. Exactly the invasion referred to cannot be decided. (4) speech . . low, as befitting a state of painful humiliation. Joy should change for moans.[a]

Note on v. 3.—Movable towers of wood were usually placed upon the mount, which were driven on wheels fixed within the bottom planks, to secure them from the enemy. Their size was not always the same, but proportioned to the towers of the city they besieged. the front was usually covered with tiles, and in later times the sides were likewise guarded with the same materials; their tops were covered with raw hides, and other things, to preserve them from fireballs and missive weapons; they were formed into several stories, which were able to carry both soldiers and several kinds of engines." All these modes of attack were practised in the days of Isaiah, who threatens Jerusalem with a siege conducted according to this method: "And I will encamp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount; and I will raise forts against thee." The Prophet Ezekiel repeats the prediction in almost the same words, adding only the name of the engine which was to be employed in battering down the walls: "Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and portray upon it the city, even Jerusalem; and lay siege against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it; and set battering-rams against it round about."[b]

5, 6. (5) strangers, or aliens, in whom Judah trusted to preserve her from calamity. They would utterly fail in the time of need. terrible ones, poss. Egyptian soldiers, on whom reliance was placed. (6) thunder, *etc.*, ch. xxviii. 17.

False security.—The saint's sleeping time is Satan's tempting time; every fly dares venture to creep on a sleeping lion. No temptation so weak, but is strong enough to foil a Christian that is napping in security. Samson asleep, and Delilah cut his locks. Saul asleep, and the spear is taken away from his very side, and he never the wiser. Noah asleep, and his graceless son has a fit time to discover his father's nakedness. Eutychus asleep, nods and falls from the third loft, and is taken up dead. Thus the Christian asleep in security may soon be surprised, so as to lose much of his spiritual strength.[a]

7, 8. (7) munition, or fortress; the stronghold of Zion. as a dream, *comp.* the sudden destruction of Babylon. (8) dreameth, but gets no satisfaction.[a] The description suits the bootless attack of Sennacherib.

"*The vision of sin* (v. 7).—Note—1. That wicked men are frequently employed to execute the Divine purpose. 2. That while doing so they frustrate their own. Now look at the vision. I. It is a dreamy vision. II. It is an appetitive vision. III. It is an illusory vision. IV. It is a transitory vision.[b]

Note on v. 8.—As the simile of the Prophet is drawn from nature, an extract which describes the actual occurrence of such a circumstance will be agreeable. "The scarcity of water was greater here at Bubaker than at Benown. Day and night the wells were crowded with cattle lowing, and fighting with each other to come at the trough. Excessive thirst made many of

a The wizards made low moaning sounds appear to come out of the ground, prob. by the art which we call ventriloquism.

"All things have rest—why should we toil alone? We only toil who are the first of things, and make perpetual moan, still from one labour to another thrown; nor ever fold our wings, nor cease from wanderings."—*Tennyson.*

b Paxton.

"Confidence in oneself is the chief nurse of magnanimity; wh., confidence, not with standing, doth not leave the care of necessary furniture for it; and therefore, of all the Grecians, Homer doth ever make Achilles the best armed." —*Sidney.*

a A 17th Century Divine.

a "Dreams, in their development, have breath, and tears and tortures, and the touch of joy; they leave a weight upon our waking thoughts; they make us what we were not—what they will, and shake us with the vision that's gone by." —*Byron.*

b Homilist.

"If we can sleep without dreaming, it is well that painful dreams are avoided. If, while we sleep, we can have any pleasing dreams, it is, as the French say, *tant gagné*, so much added to the pleasure of life."—*Franklin.*

c Mungo Park.

them furious: others being too weak to contend for the water, endeavoured to quench their thirst by devouring the black mud from the gutters near the wells; which they did with great avidity, though it was commonly fatal to them. This great scarcity of water was felt by all the people of the camp, and by none more than myself. I begged water from the negro slaves that attended the camp, but with very indifferent success: for though I let no opportunity slip, and was very urgent in my solicitations both to the Moors and to the negroes, I was but ill supplied, and frequently passed the night in the situation of Tantalus. No sooner had I shut my eyes, than fancy would convey me to the streams and rivers of my native land; there, as I wandered along the verdant bank, I surveyed the clear stream with transport, and hastened to swallow the delightful draught; but, alas! disappointment awakened me, and I found myself a lonely captive, perishing of thirst amid the wilds of Africa."[c]

a Ro. xi. 7, 8.

vr. 9–12. *Dr. T. Chalmers*, ix. 9.

v. 10. *Bp. Abernethy, A Christian, etc.* 91.

"What a thunder of omnipotence (so might I dare to speak) is seen in all! In man, in earth, in more amazing skies! Teaching this lesson pride is loth to learn—Not deeply to discern, not much to know, mankind was born to wonder and adore."—*Young.*

b R. T. S.

"A true and genuine impudence is ever the effect of ignorance, without the least sense of it."—*Steele.*

c Fénélon.

9, 10. (9) **cry,** *etc.*, addressing the unbelieving Jews, the Prophet says, Take your pleasure and riot. **not with wine,** indicating that in the previous ch. he had been speaking of moral and spiritual intoxication. (10) **Lord . . sleep,** God's judgments coming upon men's minds and feelings as truly as on men's bodies and circumstances.[a] **rulers,** Heb. *heads.*

Priestly terror.—The ignorance which prevailed in reference to the Scriptures, when Luther was raised up by God to reform the Church, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, was indeed surprising. Conrad, of Heresbach, a grave author of that age, relates the following saying of a monk to his companions, "They have invented a new language, which they call Greek: you must be carefully on your guard against it; it is the matter of all heresy. I observe in the hands of many persons a book written in that language, and which they call the New Testament: it is a book full of daggers and poison. As to the Hebrew, my brethren, it is certain that whoever learns it becomes immediately a Jew."[b]—*Evils of ignorance.*—That sovereign and universal Truth which illuminates intellectual nature, as the sun enlightens the material world. He who has never received this pure emanation of Divinity is as blind as those who are born without sight: he passes through life in darkness like that which involves the Polar regions, where the night is protracted to half the year; he believes himself to be wise, but is indeed a fool; he imagines that his eye comprehends every object, yet he lives and dies without seeing anything: or, at most, he perceives only some fleeting illusions by a glimmering and deceitful light; some unsubstantial vapours, that are every moment changing their colour and shape, and at length fade into total obscurity.[c]

a "These verses teach the moral impossibility of those understanding Divine revelation whose minds are under the dominion of sin.... The point of comparison lies in the disinclination or aversion of the mind."—*Henderson.*

11, 12. (11) **of all,** *i.e.* the vision throughout. All that God has revealed. (12) **not learned,** makes no profession of skill.[a] Judicial blindness smote the Jews, and their rulers, as a punishment for their hypocrisy, pride and obstinacy.

Ancient paper.—Some notice of the manufacture of paper from the papyrus plant may not be uninteresting. The plant itself (formerly one of the most lovely objects in the Nile scenery) is a species allied to the cyperus rush of our country, rising from the marshes with an unjointed triangular stem to the height of fifteen feet, the base being elegantly sheathed in short amber-

tinged foliage, and the summit crowned with a vase-shaped calyx, filled with a tuft of slender green fibres, which contrast finely with its still unopened buds of a conical form, and rich ruby tint. The outer bark having been removed for coarser domestic purposes, the manufacture of mats, baskets, sandals, and the like, the cellular pith was then sliced into thin laminæ, which, while still moist, were laid across each other breaking joint lengthways, at every course, and then subjected to a firm pressure, which, aided by the natural gum of the plant, formed the whole into an even sheet, from six to fourteen inches wide, and of several feet in length; from the same plant paper of various degrees of fineness was obtained, the upper portion being used for that of an inferior quality. Such a writing material, though fragile, was yet durable, as papyri older than thirty centuries still exist, little changed in colour or texture since the day that they first left the long-perished fingers of the Egyptian scribe. When required for ecclesiastical rituals, black and red inks were employed, the red as in our rubricated Bibles to head the chapters and mark the portions for recitation, and the black to constitute the text; the whole book was then rolled up, tied with a string, and fastened by a seal, frequently of clay, and to such a volume Isaiah refers in the passages I have selected for illustration.

13, 14. (13) **forasmuch,** *etc.*,[a] a solemn judicial formula, denouncing the Divine judgment on the hypocrites and formalists. **mouth . . lips,** these only; and not as finding any expression for the heart's love and devotion. **their fear,** not their heart-piety, but their mere *religion.* **precept of men,**[b] as distinct from the revealed will of God. The religion in our Lord's days was almost entirely an elaborate and painful system of human precepts. (14) **proceed to do,** lit. *add to do.* **a wonder,** *comp.* De. xxviii. 58, 59. Observe that Divine judgments are ever regarded as the Lord's *strange work.* **wisdom . . perish,**[c] so that the national counsellors should lead astray.

Formalism (*vv.* 13, 14).—You shall not find in any book a deeper social truth than that which is uttered in this text, viz., that formalism among the people destroys the genius and extinguishes the light and wisdom of their religious teachers. When there are formalists in the pew, there will be fools and blind guides in the pulpit. This is the doctrine of the text. Forms are necessary to religion as the means of its manifestation, not only to its manifestation, but to its nourishment and continued existence. There are different kinds of formalism; as of the creed and the intellect, as ritual formalism, as the formalism of a righteous life which is not based upon sound principles.[d]

Illustrative of v. 14.—One Mr. Soper, while residing at Alfriston, in England, having been called to the knowledge of the truth, separated himself from his former gay associates. Some of these giddy youths meeting him one day when going to the chapel, thus addressed him: "Well, Soper, you seem to be very zealous for religion; we shall soon hear that you are a preacher. Come, can't you preach us a sermon?" Soper very gravely replied, "No; I will name a text and will leave you to preach the sermon." Then, with great emphasis, he recited the above passage: "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the Prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall

2 Co. iii. 14, 15; Ac. xiii. 27.

vv. 11, 12. *Dr. E. Apthorp*, i. 1; *Bp. Maltby*, ii. 326; *W. J. E. Bennett*, ii. 104.

"When the Duchess of Modena was complained to that her son had too many branches to learn at one time, and that his health was suffering from the excessive labour, she calmly replied, "It were better for me to have no son than to have an ignorant son."—*J. Hutchinson.*

a Mat. xv. 8; Mk. vii. 6.

b "That the Ch. of Rome is the successor of the Pharisees, no man but will easily grant, if he consider what a mass of human traditions, both in point of belief and worship, are imposed upon the judgments and consciences of all that may be suffered to live in the visible communion of that Church."—*Bp. Sanderson.*

c "Their politic contrivances for maintaining Judah's national existence, and their whole method of reasoning about Divine things."—*Spk. Com.*

d David Loxton.

Comp. the Divine judgment in hardening Pharaoh's heart. 1 Co. i. 19—21.

v. 13. *W. Draper*, 156.

vv. 13, 14. *Dr. & Gordon*, iii. 50.

in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you." The words fell with such weight on their minds that not one of them could make a reply, nor did they ever ridicule him any more.

15—17. (15) seek deep, *etc.*, or lay their plans in utmost secrecy, thinking thus to hide them from God.[a] (16) turning . . down, or attempt to subvert the Divine plans. "Your preposterous perversion of things." potter's clay,[b] wh. God will use as He wills, making out of it what He pleases. "You evidently confuse things, you are the *clay*, not the *potter*." work say, *etc.*, see ch. xlv. 9. no understanding, and therefore man, the creature, must take his affairs out of the hands of God his Creator. (17) little while, before the execution of the Divine judgments would convince them of their error. Lebanon, here a figure for the Gentiles.[c]

The millennium fast approaching (*v.* 17).—I. The event anticipated. 1. The event in prediction in my text relates to one great event, the conversion of the whole world to Christ. This accords best with the words of the text, with the general strain of prophecy, and is most clearly marked in the context. 2. And a most glorious event it will be. II. The evidence of its near approach. 1. The Prophet judged it near in his day: 2. Much more may we consider it near at this time. Efforts making for its accomplishment. Actual commencement of a work of grace in many places. Apply:—(1) Let us look forward with holy earnestness to this blessed time; (2) Let us pray for the hastening of this long wished for day; (3) Let us each one try to help it forward.[d]

Note on v. 17.—The storms and tempests which, gathering on the highest peak of Lebanon, burst on the plains and valleys below, are often severe. When De la Valle was travelling in the neighbourhood of that mountain, in the end of April, a wind blew from its summits so vehement and cold, with so great a profusion of snow, that though he and his company "were in a manner buried in their quilted coverlets, yet it was sensibly felt, and proved very disagreeable." It is not therefore without reason that Lebanon, or the White Mountain, as the term signifies, is the name by which that lofty chain is distinguished: and that the sacred writers so frequently refer to the snow and the gelid waters of Lebanon. They sometimes allude to it as a wild and desolate region: and certainly no part of the earth is more dreary and barren than the Sannin, the region of perpetual snow. On that naked summit, the seat of storm and tempest, where the principles of vegetation are extinguished, the art and industry of man can make no impression; nothing but the creating power of God Himself can produce a favourable alteration. Thus, predicting a wonderful change, such as results from the signal manifestations of the Divine favour to individuals or the Church, the Prophet demands, "Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field?" The contrast in this promise, between the naked, snowy, and tempestuous summits of Lebanon, and a field beautiful and enriched with the fairest and most useful productions of nature, expresses, with great force, the difference which the smiles of Heaven produce in the most wretched and hopeless circumstances of an individual or a nation.[e]

18, 19. (18) deaf, those who had been judicially deafened

[a] *Whitecross.*

[b] "The reference is to the secret plan which many of the Jewish nobles had of seeking Egyptian aid against Assyria, contrary to the advice of Isaiah."—*Fausset.*

[b] "Another rendering is, 'Ye invert the order of things, putting yourselves instead of God;' just as if the potter should be esteemed as the clay."—*Horsley.*

[c] "The language is figurative, expressing the great revolution to take place at the appearing of Messiah, when Gentile barrenness would change to moral fertility and beauty, and the Jewish Church become as a mere wild forest region."—*Henderson.*

Mi. iii. 12; Is. xxxii. 15; Mat. xxi. 43; Ro. xi. 12.

[d] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"The direct end of fasting is the mortification of sin. Is your mind distempered? Your heart hard? Grace weak? And corruptions strong? Doth pride, envy, malice, the love of the world, or any other filthiness of flesh or spirit prevail? Fasting is then your duty more especially."—*Dr. Beaumont.*

[e] *Paxton.*

"The grace of

and blinded. The veil should be taken away. Comp. fig. of sealed book in *vv.* 11, 12. Some think the reference is rather to the Gentiles upon whom the light of Divine revelation should newly come.[a] (19) **the meek**, *comp.* ch. lxi. 1; Mat. iii. 5, xi. 29, etc. The meek are they who submit themselves to the righteousness of God, as contrasted with those who "go about to establish their own righteousness." **poor**, *see* Mat. v. 3.[b]

The Gospel a source of blessing to mankind (*vv.* 18, 19).—1. What is that book to which the attention of all men shall be called? The Gospel. 1. Enter a little into its contents; 2. Show briefly that this is indeed God's destined instrument for the salvation of the world. II. Its transcendent excellency. It comes to the whole world, and commends itself to all as—1. Suited to their wants; 2. Sufficient for their necessities.[c]

Gospel to be preached simply.—Of the works of a famous alchymist of the thirteenth century it is said that "whoever would read his book to find out the secret would employ all his labour in vain." All the gold makers who have written upon their favourite mystery are in the like predicament; no one can comprehend what the secret is which they pretend to divulge. May we not shrewdly guess that if they had any secret to tell they would put it in intelligible language, and that their pompous and involved sentences are only a screen for their utter ignorance of the matter? When we hear preachers talking of Divine things in a style savouring more of metaphysical subtlety than of Gospel plainness; when the seeking sinner cannot find out the way of salvation because of their philosophical jargon, may we not with justice suspect that the preacher does not know the Gospel, and conceals his culpable ignorance behind the veil of rhetorical magniloquence? Surely if the man understood a matter so important to all his hearers as the way of salvation, he would feel constrained to tell it out in words which all might comprehend.[d]

20, 21. (20) **terrible one**, the persecutors among Jewish nobles. Perhaps satirical for those who *fancy themselves* very terrible.[a] **scorner**, or scoffer at the idea that God overruled. **watch for iniquity**, *i.e.* for the opportunity of doing evil. (21) **offender . . word**, *i.e.* find out occasions for condemning men.[b] Comp. the judicial treatment of our Lord, and of Stephen. **reproveth . . gate**,[c] would not allow any one publicly to denounce their wrong-doing. Comp. their treatment of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Harmony of Gospel doctrines.—Having scattered over an open field the bones of the human body, bring an anatomist to the scene. Conduct him to the valley where Ezekiel stood, with his eye on the skulls and dismembered skeletons of an unburied host. Observe the man of science how he fits bone to bone and part to part, till from those scattered members he constructs a framework, which, apart from our horror at the eyeless sockets and fleshless form, appears perfectly, divinely beautiful. In hands which have the patience to collect, and the skill to arrange these materials, how perfectly they fit! bone to bone, and joint to joint, till the whole figure rises to the polished dome, and the dumb skeleton seems to say, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Now, as with these parts of the human frame, so is it with the doctrines of the Gospel, in so far as they are intelligible

meekness will contribute very much to the increase of our holy joy."—*Mat. Henry.*

a Acts xxvi. 17, 18.

b Ja. ii. 5.

vv. 18, 19. *J. Scott*, 310.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

A Universalist preached to a church once audience, and at its close offered to preach again at a future day; when an old friend arose, and said, "If thou hast told the truth this time, we do not need thee any more; and if thou hast told us a lie we do not want thee any more."

d C. H. Spurgeon.

a Ps. xxxvii. 35.

b "Lead men into sin by words, *i.e.* supplying them with some plausible reason to excuse sin, or to tempt to sin."—*Spk. Com.*

c Am. v. 10.

Be sure every doctrine of the Gospel is firmly fixed in your heart, before you attempt to fix them in the hearts of others.

When the Gospel through Christ is about to save us, it first reveals to us our need of salvation. A sense of your disease is the

first step towards recovery.

"If new-got gold is said to burn the pockets till it be cast forth into circulation, much more may new truth!"—*Carlyle.*

d Dr. Guthrie.

to our understandings. Scattered over the pages of sacred Scripture, let them also be collected and arranged in systematic order, and how beautifully they fit! doctrine to doctrine, duty to duty; till, all connected with each other, all members one of another, "they rise up into a form of perfect symmetry, and present that very system which, with minor differences but substantial unity, is embodied in the confessions, creeds, and catechisms of Evangelical Christendom." I have said so far as they are intelligible to us; for it is ever to be borne in mind, that while the Gospel has shallows through which a child may wade and walk on his way to heaven, it has deep, dark, unfathomable pools, which no eye can penetrate, and where the first step takes a giant beyond his depth.[d]

22—24. (22) redeemed Abraham, *i.e.* brought him out from Ur, the land of the idolaters.[a] not now, in the time the Prophet is foretelling. wax pale, "with shame and disappointment at the wicked degeneracy of his posterity, and fear as to their punishment."[b] (23) sanctify, *etc.*, the idea of the *v.* is that the time would come when the Jews would rejoice in welcoming the Gentiles as "fellow heirs," children of God with them. (24) erred in spirit, *i.e.* the unbelieving Jews (ch. xxviii. 7). The blinded and refractory Jews should at length embrace the doctrines of the Gospel."[c]

Harmony of Gospel truth.—Christ did not commit to the care of His Church any one class of truths and duties, or any number of classes of doctrines and obligations, but *all* of them. Christians are, therefore, to teach all the doctrines, and inculcate all the duties found in the Scriptures. There is no sectarianism in inspiration. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and of the entire body of truth "as it is in Jesus." Sectarianism divides the doctrine of the Spirit into its various hues, and sects and parties are formed by good men attaching themselves to one class of colours, whereas "the true light" is made up of all colours. We would never live in an atmosphere of rainbows; it might appear more beautiful than clear daylight, but it would not be so useful for the world. In a lens, no one class of rays gathered into a focus will burn an object; this is done only by a concentration of all the rays. It was by exhibiting the whole counsel of God that Paul produced in his converts the kindlings of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. If the churches think it proper to put forth the vivid hues of beauty and splendour, in their respective creeds and theological systems, let them also exhibit them with all the blendings and softenings, the harmony and symmetry of the bow in the cloud, the sign of peace and good-will to the whole earth.[d]

a "The phrase may be naturally understood, either as signifying deliverance fr. danger, and the Divine protection generally, or in a higher sense as signifying Abraham's conversion and salvation."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Fausset.

Calvin and others understand by Jacob here the patriarch himself, poetically represented as beholding and sympathising with the fortunes of his own descendants.

c Henderson.

Ho. iii. 5; Zec. xii. 10; Ac. vi. 7; Ro. xi. 26.

The light of the Gospel often shines upon men as the sun upon a dead wall, it meets with no entrance.

d Dr. T. W. Jenkyn.

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.

1—3. (1) rebellious children, with especial reference to those who favoured an Egyptian alliance as the only defence of the country.[a] not of me, their rightful Sovereign and only Protector. covering,[b] or defence. "Wrap themselves in alliances." not of, *i.e.* not suggested by My spirit. (2) walk, *etc.*, or, who are now on the way down to Egypt. (3) your shame, &c. Egypt will prove unable to help you.[c]

a "Jewish ambassadors were at the time on their way to Egypt to seek aid against Assyria."—*Fausset.* *b* Lit. *pour out* *a libation*, because

Influence of confidence.—Mr. Pillsbury, warden of the State Prison in Connecticut, once received into the prison a man of gigantic stature, whose crimes had for seventeen years made him the terror of the country. He told the criminal, when he came, he hoped he would not repeat the attempts to escape which he had made elsewhere. "It will be best," said he, "that you and I should treat each other as well as we can. I will make you as comfortable as I possibly can, and I shall be anxious to be your friend; and I hope you will not get me into difficulty on your account. There is a cell intended for solitary confinement; but we have never used it, and I should be sorry ever to have to turn the key upon anybody in it. You may range the place as freely as I do: if you trust me, I will trust you." The man was sulky, and for six weeks showed only gradual symptons of softening under the operation of Mr. Pillsbury's cheerful confidence. At length, information was brought of the man's intention to break the prison. The warden called him, and taxed him with it: the man preserved a gloomy silence. He was told it was now necessary for him to be locked in the solitary cell, and was desired to follow the warden, who went first, carrying a lamp in one hand and a key in the other. In the narrowest part of the passage, Mr. Pillsbury, a small, light man, turned round and looked in the face of the stout criminal. "Now," said he, "I ask whether you have treated me as I deserve. I have done everything I could to make you happy. I have trusted you; but you have never given me the least confidence in return, and have even planned to get me into difficulty. Is this kind? And yet I cannot bear to lock you up. If I had the least sign that you cared for me——" The man burst into tears. "Sir," said he, "I have been a very demon these seventeen years; but you treat me like a man." "Come, let us go back," said the warden. The convict had free range of the prison as before; and from that hour he began to open his heart to the warden, and cheerfully fulfilled his whole term of imprisonment.

4, 5. (4) **his princes**, *i.e.* the ambassadors had reached to these Egyptain cities, Zoan and Hanes. With prophetic vision Isaiah watches them. **Zoan**, or Tanis, N E. frontier of Egypt, and the scene of the great plagues. **Hanes**, further south; the same as *Tahpanes*, the Anysis of Herodotus. (5) **ashamed**, bec. they get nothing but promises, and Egypt utterly fails them in the evil day.[c]

Responsibility for companions.—Mention is made of two travellers that walked together to the same city, whereof the one was wise, the other foolish. And when they came where two ways met, the one broad and fair, the other strait and foul, the fool would needs go the broader way; but the wise man told him, though the narrow way seemed foul yet it was safe, and would bring them to a good lodging; and the other, seeming fair, was very dangerous, and brought them to a desperate inn. Yet because the fool would not yield to any reason, but believed what he saw with his eyes, rather than what he heard with his ears, the wise man, for company's sake, was contented to go the worse way; and being both robbed by thieves, detained in their company, and at last apprehended with the robbers, and carried before the magistrate, these two began to accuse one another, and each to excuse himself. The wise man said he told his

treaties were often made in connection with libations."—*Wordsworth.*

c Is. xx. 5; comp. fig. in Is. xviii. 1.

r. 1. *J. Randall*, 291; *R. Warner*, i. 49.

rr. 1—3. *J. C. Hare*, i. 305; *Dr. Wordsworth*, iv. 85.

A countryman who was riding with an unknown traveller over a dangerous plain, said, "This place is infamous for robbery; but for my own part, though often riding over it early and late, I never saw anything worse than myself." "In good time," replied the other; and then demanded his purse, and robbed him.

"Trust him little who praises all; him less who censures all; and him least who is indifferent about all."—*Lavater.*

a "Egypt gives them promises, but no substantial help; while the alliance brings down on Israel the anger of Assyria."—*Spk. Com.*

Je. xliii. 7; also Je. ii. 36.

Upon the outskirts of towns are shattered houses, abandoned by reputable persons. They are not empty, because all the day silent; thieves, vagabonds, and villains haunt them, in joint possession with rats, bats, and vermin.

Such are idle men's imaginations—full of unlawful company.

Confidence is the companion of success.

b Spencer.

fellow the dangers of that broad way, and therefore he only was to be blamed because he would not yield unto his counsel; but the fool had so much wit to reply, that he was a very silly creature, and knew neither the way, nor the dangers of the way, and therefore he was to be excused and the wise man to be condemned because he would follow such a fool's counsel. Whereupon the judge, having heard them both, condemned them both, —the fool because he refused to follow the counsel of the wise, and the wise man because he would not forsake the fool's company.[b]

a Henderson.

"The Prophet sees the ambassadors of Israel carrying costly presents through the waste howling wilderness, for the purpose of securing the Egyptian alliance." — *J. A. Alexander.*

b De. viii. 15; Je. ii. 6.

c Barnes.

"They are haughty in spirit; but are an idle people, given to vain boasting." —*Rashi.*

v. 7. *W. Reading,* ii. 662; *R. Erskine,* v. 397.

d Dr. D. Thomas.

e Pearse.

6, 7. (6) **the south,** *i.e.* the Negeb, or southern districts of Canaan. "The beasts of the south are the young asses and camels on which the present or subsidy was conveyed to Egypt."[a] **into a land,** better, through a land, the wilderness district between Canaan and Egypt. **lion . . serpent,** poetical description of the dangers of the journey.[b] **flying serpent,** a kind wh. springs from the trees on its prey. (7) **help in vain,** or Egyptian help is vanity. **strength . . still,** better, "The blusterer sitteth still."[c] In a sentence declaring its promises great and its performances very small.

Strength and stillness (*v.* 7).—We have here—1. A great national danger; 2. A great national sin. I. Stillness of confidence in relation to God's redemptive provision is strength. II. Stillness of confidence in relation to your future history is strength. III. Stillness of confidence in relation to present providential trials is strength.[d]

Rest in God.—To live at rest in God is a God-honouring frame and posture of soul that does much honour to God, and gives glory to Him; and therefore must have much worth and excellency in it. Of all frames, as well as actions, that is best that does honour and glorify God most; and what frame of soul does more honour and glorify God than this of being at rest in Him? This gives to God the glory of His sovereignty, and the glory of His sufficiency, two of the brightest jewels in the crown of heaven.[e]

a "Some think that two distinct inscriptions are commanded, one on a tablet, for temporary use, and one on parchment for preservation; but the terms used are probably equivalents."—*J. A. Alexander.*

Zec. vii. 11, 12.

b Is. xxx. 6; Je. viii. 17; Ho. xiii. 15; Am. v. 19.

c Ps. lxxxvii. 4; Is. xxx. 7, xxxvi. 6; Je. xlvi. 25; Eze. xxix. 3, xxx. 21, 22; Ho. xii. 1.

d Dr. D. Thomas.

e Pearse.

8, 9. (8) **table,** or tablet.[a] Give your prediction of the failure of the Egyptian alliance a permanent character, and let it be to them a serious ever-present warning. (9) **lying children,** acting lies in thus denying the covenant made with God. Here more precisely, children that are sure to deny the prediction if it is not put down in black and white.

Dislike to ministerial fidelity (*v.* 9).—I. State the truths which are usually obnoxious to such persons. Spirituality of Divine law. Depravity of human nature, etc. II. The causes of this dislike of ministerial fidelity—absolute unbelief, refinements of modern society, wounded pride, painful forebodings of future misery. III. The folly, sin and danger of a desire to suppress the faithful voice of truth, and to be flattered with the smooth language of deceit. Its folly is apparent from the consideration that no concealment of the situation of the sinner can alter his condition in the sight of God: it is sinful in its origin, its nature, its consequences. Its danger is equal to its sin and folly.[b]

A word may save a soul—The pious baker.—A baker who travelled the country disposing of his bread, stopped at a public house, where he was waited on at table by a young girl. When opportunity offered, he asked the girl if she loved the Saviour.

Zec. vii. 11, 12.

a De. vi. 9, xi. 20; Pr. iii. 3, vii. 3; Je. xvii. 1; Eze. xiii. 9; Ho. viii. 12; Hab. ii. 2.

b H. Marriott, 400.

b J. A. James.

Those who have only the form of grace will one day fall fully and finally; but it does not follow

She answered that she did not. He then in earnestness and simplicity unfolded to her the way of salvation, and urged her to accept Christ as her Saviour. The words were but few, and he returned home. Again he found himself at the same public house, but now an older woman served the table. She recognised him, and asked him if he remembered the former visit. He did. "Do you remember the girl that served you?" "I do." "She was my daughter; and O, how can I thank you for the few words you said to her on the subject of religion. They were the means of her conversion; and O, dear sir," bursting into tears, "they prepared her for a sick and dying bed, to which she was suddenly brought. She often referred to the interview, and she passed away in triumph. She is now with that Saviour you made known to her."

that those who have true grace will not abide.

"It is the virtue of few words to render plain that which thousands have obscured: as one glass will transmit a bright image of the sun, where hundreds produce but darkness and confusion."—*Macculloch.*

10, 11. (10) **seers,** the earlier name for the Prophets.[a] **see not,** anything that we do not wish to have seen. **right things,** such as we think right. **smooth,** or pleasant things. **deceits,** or illusions.[b] (11) **out of the way,** *i.e.* out of the way of obedience and righteousness which Jehovah's Prophets persisted in taking. **Holy One of Israel,** prob. the name for God which Isaiah was constantly using, and seemed full of reproaching to an unholy, self-seeking people.[c]

The swearer reproved.—Three gentlemen were travelling from the north to London by the mail train, and, as people generally do, sat without speaking to one another for a considerable time. At Rugby, while taking refreshments, the bell rang, and the train was off almost before one of the three had time to take what he required. Angry, he entered the carriage, uttering an oath. This led to a conversation between him and one of the passengers, who in a kind and gentlemanly way expostulated with him on swearing. The conversation continued till they reached a London junction, where the third passenger left them. Thus alone, the gentleman who had begun the conversation proposed they should engage in prayer. They did so, and when the train reached Euston-square they exchanged cards and parted. A little while after, the one who resided in London received a letter from his fellow-traveller, stating that in consequence of that conversation he had given his heart to God, and in the great city in which he lived had erected a Gospel-hall.[d]

a 1 Sa. ix. 9.

b Comp. Je. v. 31, xi. 21, xxvi. 8—24; Am. ii. 12.

c Isaiah here translates not what the people said by word of mouth, but what they virtually said by their wilful and wayward doings.

r. 10. *Bp. More,* ii. 174; *Dr. G. Richards, Bamp. Lec.* 168.

rr. 10, 11. *E. Bather,* iii. 362.

There is infinitely more in the new creation by grace than in the whole compass of nature, to furnish new thoughts and new ideas.

d Christn. World.

12, 13. (12) **this word,** viz., the warning against going for help to Egypt. **oppression,** marg. *fraud.* Reference may possibly be to the heavy taxation levied to find presents for Egypt. **perverseness,** the self-willedness of the national leaders, who would trust to their political schemes. (13) **iniquity,** against Jehovah the true defender of the nation. **breach . . wall,** a wall rent or cracked bellies out and bulges, and is ready suddenly to fall.[a] The higher the wall the more dangerous the breach.

A remarkable preservation.—A few years ago a circumstance occurred in connection with these words, which is remembered with thankful hearts by those who met with a providential escape. A carriage passed a high wall, which was precisely in the condition described in the text—indeed, no words could have better described its state; and it was remarked by those seated in it how very dangerous it was in a high road, and where so many

a Ps. lxii. 3.

"As the Orientals most frequently construct their walls of clay or soft brick, dried in the sun, they are extremely liable to rend, and be washed down by rain."—*Henderson.*

Grace is not a human, but a Divine principle; its actings do not belong to the old, but to the new man.

were coming and going. The words were scarcely spoken, and the danger past, than a terrible crash was heard. The breaking had come "suddenly at an instant," and the road behind was utterly impassable from the stones and rubbish of the fallen wall.

14. break it, *i.e.* the Jewish nation, which these politicians thought to preserve. potter's vessel, or Heb. *the bottle of potters.*[a] sherd, broken piece of earthenware.[b] fire . . hearth, a piece large enough to take up a live coal.[c] pit, or cistern.

Potsherds.—This solemn threatening refers to the Jews for their wicked reliance "in the shadow of Egypt." They were to be reduced to the greatest straits for thus trusting in the heathen. It is proverbial to say of those who have been robbed, and left in destitute circumstances, "They have not even a potsherd, not a broken chatty, in their possession." To appreciate this idea, it must be remembered that nearly all the cooking utensils in the East, all the domestic vessels, are made of earthenware: so that not to have a potsherd, a fragment, left, betokens the greatest misery. Even Job, in all his poverty and wretchedness, was not so destitute; for he had "a potsherd to scrape himself withal." "A sherd to take fire from the hearth." This allusion may be seen illustrated every morning in the East. Should the good woman's fire have been extinguished in the night, she takes a potsherd in the morning, and goes to a neighbour for a little fire to rekindle her own; and as she goes along, she may be seen, after proceeding a few steps, now and then blowing the burning embers, lest the small spark should expire. The Jews were not to have a sherd out of which they could drink a little water. Pumps not being in general use in the East, the natives are obliged to have something in which to convey water from the well or tank. Of a very poor country it is said, "In those parts there is not a sherd out of which you can drink a little water." "The wretchedness of the people is so great, they have not a sherd with which to take water from the tank."[d]

15–17. (15) returning, retracing your steps; calling back this Egyptian embassy.[e] rest, from your own plans, a rest which includes full trusting in God's defendings. quietness, *etc.*, that waiting for God, and waiting on God, which the Scriptures so often commend.[b] (16) flee upon horses, these being introduced from Egypt are the symbol of Egyp. help.[c] (17) thousand . . one, the reversal of the promise, De. xxxii. 30. beacon, or mast; tree bereft of branches.[d]

Salvation (*v.* 15).—Your attention is invited—I. To the blessing, salvation. II. To the manner of obtaining it. 1. By returning to God from whom we have wandered: 2. By rest, at the foot of the cross, on the Word of God.[e]

Human means unavailing for salvation.—When some one was enlarging to Coleridge on the tendency for good of some scheme which was expected to regenerate the world, the poet flung up into the air the down of a thistle which grew by the road-side, and went on to say, The tendency of that thistle is towards China; but I know, with assured certainty, that it will never get there—nay, it is more than probable that, after sundry eddyings and gyrations up and down, backwards and forwards, it will be found somewhere near the place where it grew. Such has ever

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[a] Ps. ii. 9; Je. xix. 10, 11.

[b] A.-S. *scard*, a fragment. Radically the same as *shard*, or *shard*.

"Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her."—*Shakespeare.*

"Every man is needy who spends more than he has; no man is needy who spends less. I may so fill manage my money that with £5,000 a year I purchase the worst evils of poverty, terror and shame. I may so well manage my money that with £100 a year I purchase the best blessings of wealth, safety and respect."—*Cartoniana.*

[c] *Roberts.*

[a] "Retrocession from the unlawful measures and negotiations."—*Grotius.*

[b] La. iii. 25, 26 etc.

[c] "The riding upon horses refers to the Egyptian cavalry, which they expected would be sent for their deliverance."—*Henderson.*

De. xvii. 16; Ho. xiv. 3.

[d] "Solitary, like a flag staff."—*Wordsworth.*

[e] *J. Mannering.*

"The idea suggested by this

been the issue of those boasted schemes of human wisdom which have professed to change the heart of man. Human nature is in this respect like the salt sea—all the rivers that run into it have not changed its saltness. The sun is daily evaporating its waters; but does not drink up one particle of that saline ingredient. If men will drink of its bitter waters, they sicken and madden, and die. It is thus with that malignant nature which we inherit and propagate; all human means have failed to purify it, and it stimulates to madness, disease, and death.*f*

18. wait, holding back His deliverance in hope of the people's penitent return.*a* exalted, in the judgments the people must suffer while God holds back His mercies. may have mercy, by-and-by, in the latter end. of judgment, who will not pass by His children's transgressions.*b* wait for Him, all through the judgment-time.*c*

Waiting upon God (*v.* 18).—We consider—I. The character of God, a God of judgment. Therefore—1. He is able to teach His children; 2. And how to correct them. II. God's appearances on account of His people are sometimes delayed. He does not always appear on behalf of His people—1. In answer to prayer; 2. In relieving them from their afflictions; 3. In explaining Himself with regard to their afflictions; 4. In affording the joys of salvation. III. Your duty in the meantime. Waiting includes—1. Calmness of mind; 2. Attention; 3. Patience; 4. Expectation. IV. The blessedness that will attend the exercise of waiting for Him. 1. The work itself is blessed; 2. It will prevent matter for bitter reflection; 3. His coming will amply recompense their waiting.*d*

The praying class.—While in conversation with my Sunday-school class on the last three verses of Matt. ii. I inquired if any of those present had ever felt anything of the burden of sin. After a little pause, three or four answered, "I think I have, teacher." In further conversation on the "rest," one expressed an opinion that it meant "peace and enjoyment;" a second, "a crown of life;" and a third, "the pardon of sin." While pressing the consideration of these topics, two or three were observed in tears. An earnest appeal was made, and immediately there was a sudden outburst of feeling before the school, which could not be repressed; and though surrounded by a large class of lads, from ten to fifteen years of age, almost every cheek was bedewed with tears. When their emotion had in some measure subsided, one little fellow, in an answer to a question, said that they were in the habit of meeting together every week for prayer. Some told of the pleasures they felt; others of the interruption and laughter to which they were exposed. No longer could their feelings be suppressed, and each was anxious to speak with freedom and affection to their teacher.

19–21. (19) dwell, or abide. This is most naturally referred to the return from the Bab. captivity.*a* weep no more, or no longer under the heavy burden of Divine chastisement. voice .. cry, the cry of the penitent. when, *etc.*, *i.e.* as soon as ever He hears.*b* (20) Omit *though*. The verse is a promise that even during the time of adversity God would watch over and provide for them. teachers, *etc.*, a sign of better times was to be the willingness of the people to receive the teachers of righteousness.*c*

last clause is that no two of them should be left together."—*Hitzig.*

v. 15. *J. D. Dowling*, 55.

vv. 15–19. *Abp. Leighton*, iii. 377.

f Dr. McCosh.

a Comp. Ho. v. 15.

b "Who will not let His children go uncorrected, yet will order His chastisement with never-failing equity; allowing mercy her full rights."—*Spk. Com.*

c Ps. ii. 12, xxxiv. 8; Pr. xvi. 20; Je. xvii. 7.

v. 18. *W. C. Wilson*, ii. 200.

d W. Jay.

You may have the truth of grace, when you are weak in grace. The state of the believer after the fall is more safe than that of Adam in Paradise; the reason is, he is in grace, and has Christ for his surety.

"Blessed be God's voice; for it is true, and falsehoods have to cease before it!"—*Carlyle.*

a Comp. Is. lx. 20, lxv. 19.

b Comp. Ho. xiv. 1–3, 4, etc.

c "The teachers shall no more be forced to hide themselves from

persecution, but shall be openly received with reverence."—*Maurer.*

[a] The veil taken away, thou wilt behold Him, no longer dimly revealed thro' the similitudes of the law, and the enigmas of prophetic vision, but manifested in the flesh."—*Spk. Com.*

Ps. xxxii. 8; Is. xlii. 16, lviii. 11; Jno. xvi. 13, 14.

v. 20. *Dr. J. Erskine*, i. 80.

vv. 20, 21. *Dr. J. J. Cramer*, 323.

v. 21. *Dr. T. Horton*, 298; *Dr. J. Gill*, i. 409; *J. Slade*, v. 288; *J. Frumptre*, ii. 203; *R. W. Evans*, i. 1.

[d] *Dr. J. Burns.*

As the radiation of the sun's beams of yesterday will not suffice for to-day, so neither will the grace which you received a week or a month ago be sufficient for the present moment.

[e] *Butler.*

[a] *Wordsworth.*

[b] *Fausset.*

[c] "The Bab. captivity effected this change in the Jews thoroughly, as regards gross Idol-worship. For their deliverance from subtler forms of idolatry, a higher purification was needed (Phil. iii. 8)."—*Spk. Com.*

(21) **hear a word,** the warning, guiding word of the great Teacher.

The unerring monitor (*v.* 19).—I. There is a way from earth to heaven. 1. Divine; 2. Ancient; 3. Revealed; 4. Direct; 5. Circumscribed. II. From this way there are many diverging paths. 1. The right, adding to God's method of salvation: 2. The left, omissions: 3. Tendency to turn to right or left. III. The means provided for our security, the Word. 1. Infallible; 2. Living; 3. Speaking. Apply:—(1) Place ourselves under its guidance; (2) Carefully listen; (3) Follow its directions.[d]

The tenderness of the Gospel.—What then is the nature of this so marvellous transforming message of the Gospel? It is a story, a simple story, such as a child will feel and weep over; such as a sage of seventy winters cannot fathom. It tells of a law holy as that eternal heart from which it springs; it paints the portrait of the righteousness consummate which images that law in the life; it celebrates the triumph of the moral conquest that makes the enfranchised conscience sovereign of man. Yet this were no more than others could in their measure rival. But, oh! a tale more touching than all this solemn strain is its exclusive privilege to unfold. It speaks,—it alone can speak of One whose purity, too perfect to brook one unatoned sin in the vast universe of His creation, was accompanied by a love too tender to endure that one pang should continue to exist for which His own high wisdom could provide a remedy; of a love which drew the living Author of the law from His transcendent abode into our narrow nature, that He might quench the lightnings of His own avenging justice in streams of His own human blood. It tells of that inexpressible attachment of which all human relationships (for it names them all) are too weak to be the faintest shadows of a Creator who is father and brother, and husband of His redeemed; and by all the insults of His humiliated life, by His despised poverty and His accumulated wrongs, by a sight which made the angels tremble and weep, though—mystery of unfathomed ingratitude!—men, its objects, can slumber as they listen, or wake to scoff. By the groans of Gethsemane and its bloody sweat, by the nails and the thorns of Calvary, by the last dark tortures of an expiring God, it prays us to love Him in return! This may fail to move, but it is certain that this appeal to the grateful affections is the legitimate path to the great object of a renovation, that it is a justifiable path, that it is a practicable path, that if it fail, no other that men have ever devised can offer a chance of success.[f]

22—24. (22) **covering of,** *see v.* 1. Reference is to the veil with wh. the idolatrous images were shrouded from the eye in secret shrines.[a] Or the reference may be to the gold or silver covering or plating of the idol images,[b] but this *coating* may be referred to in the term *ornament*. **cast . . away,** as if they were unclean things.[c] (23) **rain of thy seed,** needed for thy seeding-time[d] **fat and plenteous,** good in quality and abundant in quality. (24) **ear**[e] **the ground,** or till the ground. **clean provender,** or salted food, seasoned with acid herbs, and very grateful to the stomachs of cattle.[f]

Note on v. 24.—In these words the Prophet foretells a season of great plenty, when the cattle shall be fed with corn better in quality, separated from the chaff, and (as the term rendered clean

in our version properly signifies) acidulated, in order to render it more grateful to their taste. The evangelist clearly refers to the practice, which was common in every part of Syria, of ploughing with the ass, when he calls him, *upozugion*, a creature subject to the yoke. In rice-grounds, which require to be flooded, the ass was employed to prepare them for the seed, by treading them with his feet. It is to this method of preparing the ground that Chardin supposes the Prophet to allude when he says, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass." They shall be blessed under the future reign of the promised Messiah. In times anterior to His appearing, their country was to be made a desolation; briers and thorns were to encumber their fields; their sumptuous dwellings were to be cast down; their cities and strongholds levelled with the dust. But when Messiah commences His reign times of unequalled prosperity shall begin their career. The goodness of Jehovah shall descend in fertilising showers, to irrigate their fields, and to swell the streams which the skill and industry of the husbandman conducts among his plantations, or with which he covers his rice-grounds. Secure from the ruinous incursions of aliens, and in the sure hope of an abundant harvest, he shall scatter his rice on the face of the superincumbent water, and tread it into the miry soil with "the feet of the ox and the ass." Prosperous and happy himself, he will consider it his duty, and feel it his delight, "to do good and to communicate,"—to succour the widow and the fatherless, to open his doors to the stranger, to diffuse around him the light of truth, and to swell, by the diligent and prudent use of all the means that Providence has brought within his reach, the sum of human enjoyment.[e]

25, 26. (25) **mountain . . rivers,** a figurative description of abundant fertility.[a] **towers,** fig. for the great oppressors, as Babylon. (26) **light,** *etc.*, evidently fig. description of the brightness and glory of the times of Messiah. **breach,** *v.* 14.

The bliss of being reconciled to God (*v.* 26).—Refer to history of context, and point out other seasons when this promise receives its fuller accomplishment. I. At the first reconciliation of the soul with God. 1. The convictions of an awakened conscience are as deep wounds; 2. Reconciliation with God heals those wounds; 3. And this is a season wherein the knowledge and joy of the soul are much enlarged. II. At any return of the soul to God after a season of darkness. 1. God finds it necessary sometimes to hide His face from His people, and then their wounds open afresh; 2. But the return of God to the soul binds up this breach; 3. And this is also another season of peculiar instruction and comfort. The full accomplishment of the text will take place—III. At the hour of the Christian's dissolution. 1. God never entirely withholds His chastening rod in this world; 2. But at death there is an end of all that is penal and painful; 3. Then will this promise be fulfilled to the utmost extent. Inference:—(1) They who have never been wounded in their souls on account of sin are yet strangers to all spiritual light and happiness; (2) They who feel a wounded spirit should labour to improve their convictions to the utmost.[b]

The way to be saved—The Hindoo's confession.—When one of the converted Hindoos came to be baptised, he made this confession. He said he had been for years searching for a way of

d Le. xxvi. 4; De. xxviii. 12.

e First Eng. *erien, erien, eren:* Lat. *arare,* to plough. "In eringe and sowynge swonken full hard."—*Piers Ploughman.*

f J. A. Alexander.

r. 23. *H. J. Hastings,* 53.

"For all the practical purposes of life, Truth might as well be in prison as in the folio of a schoolman; and those who release her from the cobwebbed shelf, and teach her to live with men, have the merit of liberating, if not of discovering her."—*Colton.*

g Paxton.

a "A description of the height to which agriculture would be carried, by means of artificial irrigation, after the overthrow of the Assyrians."—*J. D. Michaelis.*

b Studies for the Pulpit.

"God can do much work in a short time. Many are the examples in the Acts of the Apostles of God's working this faith in men's hearts, even like lightning falling from heaven. So in the same hour that Paul and Silas began to preach the gaoler repented, believed, and was baptised; as were three thousand

by St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, who all repented and believed on his first preaching. And, blessed be God, there are now many living proofs that He is still mighty to save."—*J. Wesley.*

happiness in Poojahs (holy places in the river, etc.), but all in vain; but when he heard the word of Christ he could not rest. He sat up a whole night in distress of mind. He had great fears about his sins. When asked how he lost them, he said, "They went away in thinking of Christ." Thus we shall never get rid of our fear in any other way than by thinking on Christ. His atoning sacrifice. His finished righteousness, His great love. His free promise. His willingness to save. It was this that made another Hindoo say, when he was asked how he hoped to be saved, "I am a sinner, I have nothing to give to God, but if a rich man become a poor man's surety, he may trust in him; thus I place my trust in Christ Jesus."

[a] There seems to be a mixed reference in these verses to the calamities of Judah in Hezekiah's days, and to the final destruction of Judah's enemies.

27, 28. (27) **cometh from far,** in the expedition against Babylon led by Cyrus. **heavy,** lit. *even grievousness of flame.* (28) **reach . . neck,** Is. viii. 8. **sieve of vanity,** the sieve that separates the chaff of their vanity, vain plans and schemes. **bridle,** *etc.*, which leads out of the road, and draws to destruction.[a]

A case of retribution.—A gentleman, who was very ill, sending for the late Dr. Lake, told him that he found he must die, and gave him the following account of the cause of his death:—He had, about a fortnight before, been riding over Hounslow Heath, where several boys were playing at cricket. One of them striking the ball, hit him just on the toe with it, looked him in the face, and ran away. His toe pained him extremely. As soon as he came to Brentford, he sent for a surgeon, who was for cutting it off. But unwilling to suffer that, he went on to London. When he arrived there, he immediately called another surgeon to examine it, who told him his foot must be cut off. But neither would he hear of this; and so, before the next day, the mortification seized his leg, and in a day or two more struck up into his body. Dr. Lake asked him whether he knew the boy that struck the ball? He answered, "About ten years ago, I was riding over Hounslow Heath, where an old man ran by my horse's side, begged me to relieve him, and said he was almost famished. I bade him begone. He kept up with me still; upon which I threatened to beat him. Finding that he took no notice of this, I drew my sword, and with one blow killed him. A boy about four years, who was with him, screamed out 'His father was killed!' His face I perfectly remember; that boy it was who struck the ball against me, which is the cause of my death."[b]

[a] As well may you try to write upon a sheet of water, or engrave upon rotten wood, as to convert a heart without the grace of God.

[b] *Whitecross.*

29, 30. (29) **holy solemnity,** the passover-memorial of national deliverance. **with a pipe,** "It is said that each band of pilgrims on its way to Jerusalem was headed by a person who played the flute."[a] (30) **glorious voice,** *lit.* the majesty of His voice, in the exertion of His power. **lighting down,** ir stroke of judgment.

Music at night.—Music is considered far more enchanting at night than at any other period: "it gives cheerfulness to darkness, and pleasure to the heart." Their favourite proverb is, "the day song is like the flower of the gourd," *i.e.* devoid of smell. Nothing is more common than for adults to sing themselves to sleep: thus, as they recline, they beat a tabret and chant the praises of their gods, till through heaviness they can scarcely articulate a word. At other times the mother or wife gently taps the instrument, and in soft tones lulls the individual to

[a] *Vitringa*, thro' *Spk. Com.*

[a] "The Gospel's glorious hope; its rule of purity, its eye of prayer, its feet of firmness on temptation's steep, its bark that fails not, mid the storm of death."—*Mrs. Sigourney.*

"Oh! it came over me like the sweet South, that

repose. In the night, should they not be able to sleep, they have again recourse to the same charm, and not until they shall have fairly gone off in fresh slumbers will their companions have any rest. Hence, in passing through a village or town at midnight, may be heard people at their nightly song, to grace the festive scene, to beguile away their time, to charm their fears, or to procure refreshing sleep. The Jews then were to be delivered from the proud Assyrian's yoke, and again to have their pleasant song in the night.[b]

31—33. (31) **smote . . rod,** in turn the Assyrian shall come under the Divine judgments. Instead of *which smote*, read, *with the rod shall He smite.* (32) **grounded staff,** or *rod of doom.* Lit. *staff of God's appointment.* **tabrets and harps,** signifying the joy of the redeemed ones. **battles of shaking,** or wavings of the Divine Hand. (33) **Tophet,** or a place of burning[a] (2 Ki. xxiii. 10). The place in valley of Hinnom where fires constantly burned the refuse. So fig. of the Divine burnings of Judah's enemies.

Miracles of Providence.—On the 5th of August, 1530, an awful crisis for the Reformation, when the firmest seemed to swerve, and the boldest to tremble, Luther thus wrote to Chancellor Bench: "I have recently witnessed two miracles. This is the first: As I was at my window, I saw the stars and the sky, and that vast and glorious firmament in which the Lord has placed them. I could nowhere discover the columns on which the Master has supported His immense vault; and yet the heavens did not fall. And here is the second: I beheld thick clouds hanging above us like a vast sea. I could neither perceive the ground on which they reposed, nor cords by which they were suspended; and yet they did not fall upon us, but saluted us rapidly, and fled away."[b]

breathes upon a bank of violets, stealing and giving odour."—*Shakespeare.*

b Roberts.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

1, 2. (1) **Egypt for help,** *see* ch. xxx. 1—3.[a] **chariots,** "in Assyrian sculptures chariots are represented drawn by three horses, and with three men in them." (2) **is wise,**[b] and therefore able to deal with this rebellious people. Wisdom was not alone to be found in Egypt. **evil,** or the evil, the very evil which this trust in Egypt was to defend them from. **the house,** *i.e.* the whole race. **the help,** *i.e.* the Egyptian helpers.

A miner.—Some years ago, J. M., a miner, of the age of eighteen, in the parish of W., was severely burned in a coal-pit by one of those explosions of inflammable air which often prove destructive. One of his companions in labour suffered so severely from the fire that in three days after the explosion he expired; but J. M. unexpectedly recovered, and in about three months was in a fit state to return to his labour. Not improved, however, by his late narrow escape from death, he immediately relapsed into his former wicked manner of life. On the Saturday evening previously to the Monday on which he expected to return to his work, he agreed with one of his companions to rob an orchard, and was heard on the occasion to utter blasphemous words, and to invoke upon himself the curse of that God who had mercifully restored him to health. Little did he think that his awful prayer

a "It is universally agreed that the destruction of the Assyrian king is here described as a burning of his body at a stake, or funeral pile."—*J. A. Alexander.*
c. 32. T. W. Mossman, 29.
v. 33. H. Greenwood, 230; *Alex. Pirie, Crit. Obs. Wks.* iii.
"If piety be thus debarr'd access on high; and of good men, the very best be singled out to bleed, and bear the scourge,—what is reward, and what is punishment? But who shall dare to tax Eternal Justice?"—*Congreve.*

a "That the Egyptians were noted at a very early period for their attention to the breeding of horses, and their using them in chariots, appears fr. Gen. xlvii. 17, l. 9; Ex. ix. 3, xiv. 7, 9.—*Henderson.*
b "They had come to consider obedience to God's law a piece of old-world simplicity; which debarred them from the advantages of Eg. culture and intelligence."—*Spk.Com.*
"Would not infinite wisdom, engaged on their side, stand them

in more stead than all the policies of Egypt?"—*Mat. Henry.*

"Every created thing glorifies God in its place, by fulfilling His will, and the great purpose of His providence; but man alone can give tongue to every creature, and pronounce for all a general doxology."—*Kirby.*

c R. T. S.

would be shortly answered: but, mark the result! While they were in the act of committing the theft. J. M., who had got into the tree, suddenly fell to the ground. The branch on which he stood to shake off the fruit broke from the stem, and he fell. The fall not only broke his thigh, but shattered his whole frame. In this situation he lay for some time, until his companion in wickedness procured help to convey him home, and on the Tuesday following his soul was summoned to the bar of God! Thus died J. M. in the very bloom of youth: a young man of vicious habits and of a depraved heart. Young persons are apt to indulge in sin, under an idea that they have yet time enough to prepare for death; but how often does the Almighty speak in the terrors of His judgments, and say to us, "Be ye therefore ready, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh!"[c]

3. **men**, Heb. *adam*, made out of the ground. Only creatures. **flesh**, strikingly contrasted with spirit, or spiritual aid, such as God can **give**.[a] **he that helpeth**, *i.e.* the Egyptian. **he that is holpen**, *i.e.* the people of Judah. "Fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judæa and Egypt."[b]

The spiritual universe (*v.* 3).—I. There is in the universe a species of existence separable from all material organisations. 1. We attach the idea of elementalness to spirit; 2. And the idea of moral activity; 3. And of reflection; 4. And of religiousness; 5. And of self-modification; 6. And absolute personal identity. Turning to evidence we find that—(1) The structure of the visible universe indicates the existence of spirit; (2) The concurrent impressions of mankind sustain the belief; (3) The Bible most unequivocally declares the fact. II. That of this species of spiritual existence man is a member, even in his corporeal and earthly state. 1. All the evidence, either for the existence of matter or spirit, is derived exclusively from phenomena; 2. That essence whose phenomena appeal most directly to consciousness is the most conclusively proved; 3. The phenomena of mind alone appeal directly to consciousness. Impress upon men who live as if they had no soul—(1) That they are now in the spiritual world; (2) They are now amenable to all the laws of the spiritual world; (3) They are forming a character which will determine their lasting condition in the spiritual world. III. That these spiritual existences are the chief forces of the world. 1. Spirit is the original power; 2. The subordinating power. Apply:—(1) Rise to the greatness of your nature; (2) What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?[c]

Spiritual natures.—It is the law of Divine wisdom that no spirit carries with it into another state and being any habit or mental qualities except those which may be connected with its new wants and enjoyments: and knowledge relating to the earth would be no more useful to these glorified beings than their earthly system of organised dust, which would be instantly resolved into its ultimate atoms, at such a temperature: even on the earth the butterfly does not transport with it into the air the organs or the appetites of the crawling worm from which it sprung. There is, however, one sentiment or passion which the moral or spiritual essence carries with it into all its stages of being, and which in these happy and elevated creatures is continually exalted; the love of knowledge or of intellectual power,

a "The antithesis of flesh and spirit, like that of God and man, is not metaphysical, but rhetorical, and is intended simply to express extreme dissimilitude or inequality."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Henderson.

Comp. Je. xxxvii. 5—7, xlvi. 1, 2.

c 3. *R. Hall*, vi. 1, v. 113.

c Dr. D. Thomas.

"The grace of Jesus, which is infinitely pure, like the fountain from whence it flows, cannot unite with the love of sensual pleasure and true enjoyment of the world. If, therefore, thou desirest the heavenly gift, thou must banish from thy heart every affection that obstructs its entrance."—*Thomas à Kempis.*

"The style of the Gospels is admirable in a thousand different views; and in this, amongst others, that we meet there with no invectives, on the part of the historians,

which is, in fact, in its most ultimate and perfect development, the love of infinite wisdom and unbounded power, or the love of God. Even in the imperfect life that belongs to the earth, this passion exists in a considerable degree; increases even with age; outlives the perfection of the corporeal faculties, and at the moment of death, is felt by the conscious being; and its future destinies depend upon the manner in which it has been exercised and exalted.[d]

4, 5. (4) **lion,** frequent image of the power of God.[a] "The point of comparison with the lion is the fearless might of Jehovah."[b] **roaring,** better growling,[c] to prevent any from attempting its rescue. **multitude of shepherds,** representing the combination to deliver Judah from the Divine judgments. **fight for,** better *against.*[d] (5) **birds flying,** or, covering, brooding, used in reference to the protection of their young.[e] **passing over,** with allusion to the destroying angel passing over Israel when Egypt's firstborn were destroyed.[f]

God the protector of His people (*vv.* 4, 5).—I. The protection which God will afford to His people. He promised to protect them with—1. The firmness of a lion; 2. The success of the attendant angel. II. Our duty resulting from it. 1. Affiance; 2. Gratitude; 3. Fidelity.[g]

The albatross.—The albatross has often served poor Jack a good turn for food when his larder has run low, or when he has been cast upon some desolate sea-bird island; and many anonymous anecdotes are told in the forecastle respecting them. But the most remarkable I have heard, bordering indeed upon the marvellous and incredible, if not itself a providential miracle, is the following, contained for substance in a letter from an officer in the eighty-third regiment of the English army to his friends in Montreal. While the division to which the writer belonged was on its way to the Orient, being at the time a short distance eastward of the Cape, one of the men was severely flogged for some slight offence. Maddened at the punishment, the poor fellow was no sooner released than, in sight of all his comrades and the ship's crew, he sprang overboard. There was a high sea running at the time, and, as the man swept on astern, all hope of saving him seemed to vanish. Relief, however, came from a quarter where no one ever dreamed of looking for it before. During the delay incident on lowering a boat, and while the crowd on deck were watching the form of the soldier struggling with the boiling waves, and growing every moment less distinct, a large albatross, such as are always found in those latitudes, coming like magic, with an almost imperceptible motion, approached and made a swoop at the man, who, in the agonies of the death-struggle, seized it and held it firm in his grasp, and by this means kept afloat until assistance was rendered from the vessel. Incredible as this story seems, the name and position of the writer of the letter, who was an eye-witness of the scene, places its authenticity beyond a doubt. But for the assistance thus afforded, no power on earth could have saved the soldier, as, in consequence of the tremendous sea running, a long time elapsed before the boat could be manned and got down, all this time the man clinging to the bird, whose flutterings and struggles to escape bore him up. Who, after this, should despair? A raging sea—a drowning man—an albatross; what eye could see

against Judas or Pilate, nor against any of the enemies, or the very murderers of their Lord."—*Pascal.*

d Sir H. Davy.

a Ho. v. 14, xi. 10, xiii. 7, 8; Am. iii. 8; Re. v. 5.

b Fausset.

c The word used denotes a suppressed and feeble sound.

d Delitzsch.

e Mat. xxiii. 37.

f "This promise of Div. defence is conditioned on *v.* 6, that God's people turn from their deep falling away from Him."—*Nägelsbach.*

g C. Simeon, M.A.

Dr. Wolff relates that he and his companions in travel remained two nights in a village inhabited by the tribe Shiho, who are shepherds. While sleeping with them under the trees, they were constantly disturbed by the attempts of lions to enter the sheepfold, and the efforts of the shepherds to expel them. Dr. Wolff says that so great was the noise occasioned by the roar of the lions, that the force of the description in the text could be easily felt.

Truth is a strong citadel. However often besieged, it remains invulnerably secure. The arrows of falsehood may

often assail it; but unharmed, and unshaken, it stands out in serene majesty, immutable as its Author, imperishable as eternity. *h Dr. Cheever.*

safety under such circumstances? or who will dare to call this chance? Is it not rather a lesson intended to stimulate faith and hope, and teach us never to despair, since, in the darkest moment, when the waves dash, and the winds roar, and a gulf seems closing over our heads, there may be an albatross at hand with a commission to save us from Him of whom it is said, "As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it, and passing over He will preserve it."[h]

a "An argument enforcing repentance is drawn from the preceding promises of Divine interposition."—*Henderson.*

Is. ii. 20, xxx. 22.

Grace is the very opposite of Nature, and if we were to sum up the evidence of growth in grace in one word, we should say that it is to grow less and less like ourselves.

b R. T. S.

6, 7. (6) **turn ye**, *see* Ho. xiv. 1. **deeply revolted**, even with deliberate plan and purpose.[a] (7) **cast away**, as useless, and as the sign that they had for ever abandoned their trust in them. **for a sin**, to be an occasion of sin; or whereby you have contracted guilt.

Ancient Britain.—In the writings of the Rev. Mr. Maurice, on *Indian Antiquities*, when referring to the worship practised by the British Druids, he remarks:—The pen of history trembles to relate the baleful orgies which their frantic superstition celebrated, when, enclosing men, women, and children in one vast wicker image, in the form of a man, and filling it with every kind of combustibles, they set fire to the huge colossus. While the dreadful holocaust was offering to their sanguinary gods, the groans and shrieks of the consuming victims were drowned amidst shouts of barbarous triumph, and the air was rent, as in the Syrian temple of old, with martial music! Religion shudders at such a perversion of its name and rites, and humanity turns with horror from the guilty scene. What has the Gospel done for our beloved country! And shall we refuse to believe it ourselves, or give it to others?

a "He shall have no confidence in his strongholds, and will not halt in his flight till he has arrived at Nineveh."—*Wordsworth.*

2 Kl. xix. 35, 36.

b Maurer.

c "The true explanation of the clause seems to be that which supposes an allusion both to the sacred fire on the altar, and to the consuming fire of God's presence, whose altar flames in Zion and whose wrath shall thence flume to destroy His enemies."—*J. A. Alexander.*

d S. Coley.

8, 9. (8) **the Assyrian**, in the day when God delivered His people, Assyria was to come under Divine judgment. **not . . man**, *i.e.* of *one that is not man.* Refer. may be, in the first case, to Sennacherib's overthrow, by the unseen visitation of God. **mean man**, better, *of one not born of man.* **discomfited**, or spirit-broken. (9) **his stronghold**, trans. "And his rock shall pass away because of terror."[a] **ensign**, "the banner of Jehovah protecting the Jews."[b] **whose fire**, hearth and altar fire; the sign that God regards Jerusalem as His house, and therefore will defend it.[c]

An evil conscience.—An ill conscience is no comfortable companion to carry with thee. An ill conscience is like a thorn in the flesh. A thorn in the hedge may scratch you as you pass by it; but a thorn in the flesh rankles with you wherever you go: and the conscience, the ill conscience, the conscience that is ill at ease, it makes you ill at ease. You cannot have peace so long as you have an evil conscience, so long as there is that continual monition flashing across your mind: "Judgment cometh, death cometh: am I ready?" Many a time, when you go to your worldly scenes of pleasure, this conscience, like the finger writing on the wall of the palace of the king of Babylon, alarms and frightens you. You tell nobody about it. Strange thoughts strike across your mind. You have no rest. Can a man rest on a pillow of thorns? Can a man rest with the heartache? Can a man rest with his soul disturbed with the horrors of guilt? I tell thee there is no rest to thee till thou comest to Christ. He alone can calm a conscience.[d]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

1. a king, a general promise, but with evident special reference to Messiah.[a] princes, the subordinate authorities. in judgment, or according to right principles; the very essence of right ruling being the *fear of the Lord*.

Christ's righteousness.—Salvation, through the transference of righteousness from the Saviour to the sinner, may be thus illustrated:—Before you stands a bath, as it is called—a large vessel full of acid liquor. At one end, immersed in the fluid, hangs a sheet of silver; while above, and passing from side to side, is extended a thread of metal, ready to be connected with a powerful battery, which, when I saw the process, was concealed in a room below. A vessel of common metal being produced was hung on the wire, and plunged into the bath; in which I may remark, the fluid was so clear that you could see to the bottom. The wire on which it was suspended was then connected with the electric battery; and what happened? A very remarkable result. By means of the mighty though unseen agent that was thus brought into action, the particles of silver were taken from the sheet of it, and passing invisibly through the translucent fluid, were transferred to the vessel that had been immersed in the bath. No sound accompanied the mysterious process, no violent action, no sign of motion,—the eye saw nothing but the dull metal beginning to assume a brilliant appearance, and in time, through what looked more like magic than common art, this base metal shone in a coating of the purest silver. Such a change, but far greater and more thorough, is wrought on the soul through the unseen and almighty influence of the Holy Spirit, as soon as faith has established a connection between the Saviour and the sinner. Righteousness is withdrawn from the former, and transferred to the latter. In the words of an inspired apostle, the believer puts on Christ, to stand before God covered with those merits, and justified by that righteousness which makes a sinner just. If this process of art suggested that resemblance, it presented under one aspect a mighty difference. Robbed of its precious metal, what was once a sheet of silver became in time a dull, attenuated, worthless thing. Its treasures were exhausted; Christ's never are. It could coat and cover a certain number,—no more. But in Him there is righteousness for all the world, enough of mercy in the Father, of merit in the Son, and of grace in the Spirit, for every child of guilt.[b]

2. a man, *comp.* Zech. vi. 12: the man called a king in *v.* 1, evidently the Messiah.[a] Some think that allusion to His humanity is intended.[b] hiding .. wind, shade of a rock to a heated traveller. rivers, *etc.*, or streams to desert traveller. weary, or wearying, by reason of its heat and its drought.[c]

The suffering world and the relieving Man (*v.* 2).—I. The suffering world. 1. A tempest: conflicting thoughts, sinful passions, guilty memories, terrible foreboding; 2. A drought; 3. Exhaustion. II. The relieving Man. 1. He is a shelter from moral storms: 2. He is a river in moral droughts; 3. He is the recruiting, resting place in exhaustion.[d]

Shadow of a rock.—The road to-day lay through St. Ann's, one

[a] "It is as if Isaiah had said, the day is coming when power shall be exercised and government administered, not as at present (in the reign of Ahaz), but with a view to the faithful execution of the laws."—*J. A. Alexander.*

Ps. xlv. 1, 6, 7; Ze. ix. 9.

v. 1. *W. Reading*, iv. 321; *T. R. Birks*, *Blooms. Lec.* x. 57; *A. Tuckney*, 460; *W. Daltry*, 61.

"It is not barely said that 'He,' but, as the original has it, 'He Himself shall save.' Joshua saved Israel, not by his own power, not of himself, but God by him; neither saved he his own people, but the people of God; whereas Jesus Himself, by His own power—the power of God—saves His own people, the people of God."—*Bishop Pearson.*

[b] *Dr. Guthrie.*

[a] "To interpret the sublime imagery of this verse in application to a mere human being, would be quite repugnant to the spirit of the sacred writers."—*Henderson.*

[b] "Christ's humanity is here asserted, bec. it

was by suffering and perfect obedience in His human nature that He received the kingdom here described (Phil. ii. 8, 9)."—*Wordsworth.*

c Is. iv. 6, xxv. 4; Ps. lxiii. 1.

v. 2. *R. Robinson*, i. 87, ii. 258; *T. Boston*, ix. 220; *H. Moir*, 46; *Jon. Edwards*, ii. 923; *H. Venn*, 185; *S. Lavington*, ii. 428; *R. Coutts*, 154; *W. Taylor*, 255; *W. C. Wilson*, ii. 252; *E. Cooper*, v. 98; *J. Marriott*, 180; *H. Blunt*, i. 23; *H. Jelley*, 85; *C. Bradley*, i. 45; *H. Melvill*, 98.

d *Dr. D. Thomas.*

"Sunlight seeking hidden shadow, touch'd the green leaves all a-tremble with gold light."—*Massey.*

e *C. H. W. Waddell, Jamaica.*

a *Spk. Com.*

Is. xxxiv. 4, the same word is translated *fearful.*

b "Possibly with reference to the drunken scorners who, in stammering style, imitated Isaiah's warnings to mock them (Is. xxviii. 7—11, 13, etc.)."—*Maurer.*

v. 3. *J. Calthorp*, ii. 57.

of the most luxuriant parts of this luxuriant island. The plains near the sea covered with rich crops of the sweet cane, and the high hills behind them clothed to the summit with woods: the groves of cocoa-nut trees along the shore, and the ships and boats in the bay before the old town, all bright in the morning sun's ray, presented a most lovely scene, and filled my mind with a kind of devotional rapture to the Creator of all, whose work, even though cursed, is still so beautiful. By eleven o'clock I had reached Roaring River, and stopped there to rest and refresh myself and horse. Here is a scene almost beyond description. Above the bridge a hundred streams are seen pouring through a thick wood, and at every yard tumbling over stumps and stones. Just as they reach the arch they all unite and rush over a high ledge, from side to side of which the bridge is thrown, sweeping away below in a foaming torrent, through a deep channel worn in the rocks, and hastening, as it were, impetuously over a succession of falls, to throw itself into the bosom of its parent ocean. Standing at some distance down its course, and viewing the rushing waters up through the arch, I felt riveted, as if expecting that it would be exhausted by its very violence, and of necessity become somewhat calmed, but still it rushed, and raged, and roared, with a force irresistible and inexhaustible. Oh, how delightful such a cool spot is to rest in the midst of a long journey from the meridian sun of this burning clime! It is then we feel the truth and power of the Scripture expressions, "The shadow of a great rock in a weary land," and "streams in the desert." I remembered what a boy once answered when I asked him what kind of a place heaven is; he said, "It must be a very cool place;" and I compared it with what the Scriptures say of the same blessed regions, "The sun shall not light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." Two or three hours' rest in this romantic spot enabled man and beast to proceed on their journey with renewed vigour. Soon after, the way was carried by another bridge right over a considerable waterfall. The road was new, and seemed to have been led in this path to show these beautiful rivers; but not having time now to examine and admire the view, I determined to make this my stopping-place on my return.*e*

3, 4. (3) **eyes . . dim**, *comp.* threatening, ch. vi. 9, 10. *Them that see* refers to the Prophets or teachers of the people. **them that hear**, the people who are under instruction. (4) **rash**, marg. *hasty:* "who from want of faith were ever for precipitating matters, instead of abiding God's time."*a* **stammerers**, those who speak uncertainly and confusedly about Divine things.*b* **plainly**, in simple, clear language.

Spiritual anatomy—the eye (*v.* 3).—1. There are the blinded and the open eyes; 2. There are the eyes rightly and wrongly directed; 3. There are the eyes of the proud and of the humble; 4. There are the eyes of the covetous and of the humble; 5. There are vain eyes and those that delight in truth; 6. There are the eyes of the impure and of the holy; 7. There are the eyes of the cruel and of pity and compassion; 8. There are eyes reddened with wine; 9. There are eyes dim with age, grief, and sickness; 10. There is the eye of holy joy and gladness. Apply:—(1) How

important a renewed understanding ; (2) A rich use of the eyes ; (3) A watchful care ; (4) Hopeful expectation.[c]

Rev. S. Kilpin.—On one occasion, whilst the late Rev. S. Kilpin was preaching, but not in his own pulpit, he mentioned the great God by the name of "the Deity." A sailor, who was listening, immediately started from his seat, his elbows fully spread, and exclaimed aloud, "Deity! well, who is He? is He our God Almighty?" The attendants were about to turn him out ; but the minister stood reproved, and requested him to resume his seat, with the remark, "Yes, my friend, I did mean the Almighty God." The sailor rejoined, "I thought so, but was not quite sure : I never heard that name before." The humbled minister replied, "You had a right to inquire ; I was to blame : whilst delivering God's message of mercy and justice to immortal souls, I ought not to have given my Divine Master a name which prevented the message from being understood." "Thank you, sir," was the sailor's reply ; and he looked as though he would have devoured the remaining part of the sermon. After the service, he came and begged pardon for the interruption ; and, with a sailor's frankness, requested the kind gentleman to take some refreshment with him, and make it up.[d]

5, 6. (5) **vile person**, in the Heb. there is a play upon words. "The *nabal* shall no more be called *nadib*, a prince."[a] **churl**,[b] or *niggard*, but rather with the idea of crafty, designing. His schemes being found out, his seeming liberality is disgraced. (6) **speak villany**, and to show himself as he really is, **hypocrisy**, or profligacy. **make empty**, starve those who long for Divine instructions.[c]

Profanity.—The profaneness of which we speak to-day, is not only or chiefly a profaneness of speech. There is a fashion in these things. Men of a past generation habitually used expressions which would now be scouted in society as shockingly blasphemous. But not on that account is profaneness (in the Scripture sense of the word) either obsolete or unfashionable. "Profane" is the opposite, not of "reverent," but of "sacred." When we speak of things sacred and profane—terms by which, for example, we often distinguish between Bible and other history, sometimes between a church and a common building—we mean to express, however inaccurate or even erroneous the idea, that God is in the one and not in the other. "Sacred" is "consecrated," "profane" is "open"—open to man's use, open to any common or worldly purpose, free to the tread of any comer, to be entered without token or gesture of reverence, and employed without sacrilege in occupations not religious. Esau was profane, because the consecrating mark was not on him ; Jacob, whatever his faults, lived to realise that appropriation of life and soul to God which makes the character sacred and the man a saint. When we seek to try and examine ourselves by the test here proposed—"lest there be among you a profane person as Esau"—we may use as our criterion the suggestion of the text. Esau was profane, because "for a morsel of meat he sold his birthright." "Behold, I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" Can the remote prospect of an inheritance, ages hence, for my posterity, of this land, in which my father, like his father, is the inmate of a tent, having no possession there but of a melancholy cave for burial—can the

c Dr. J. Burns.

It is well to remember, that all which is merely outward will perish ; only that will remain which the grace of God has wrought within you.

"Truth is the object of our understanding, as good is of our will ; and the understanding can no more be delighted with a lie than the will can choose an apparent evil."—*Dryden.*

d R. T. S.

a For the word *nabal*, sometimes trans. *fool*, see Ps. xiv. 1 ; Pr. xvii. 7, xxx. 22 ; Je. xvii. 11.

"When men's eyes are opened, they will no longer confound the essential distinctions of moral character. Things will then be called by their right names."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b A.-S. *ceorl*, a freeman of the lowest rank ; *Icel. karl*, a man.

c "The rulers and teachers who urged men to exchange the guidance of religious faith for that of worldly wisdom, and to prefer the licence of Syrian or Egyptian rites to the holiness of God's law, left men, amidst all their joviality, with hungry and parched souls."—*Spk. Com.*

God is the same, whether His face shines on the

true believer or not; just as darkness does not show any want of light in the sun.

The great Mr. Boyle had such a veneration of God, and such a sense of His presence, that he never mentioned the name of God without a pause, and a visible stop in his discourse.

"As the owl is hooted and wondered at among other birds; even so the godly are often made a gazing-stock and wonderment to the ungodly, because the course of godliness is most strange and foolish in their eyes."—*Cawdray.*

"The following facts were told me by a good man, who was well acquainted with the person spoken of and the particulars stated. The captain of a vessel which sailed in the North Sea from the port of Hull was a notorious blasphemer. On one of his passages he met with a succession of storms more than usual. He became more than ordinarily profane, and in the rage of his spirit he cursed the God who had sent such storms. That instant he was struck with paralysis, and the use of his speech taken from him for life. He finally lost his reason, became a maniac, and died a wretched death

idea, beautiful but unsubstantial, of a possible place in the march of great events, long millenniums distant—events by which spiritual evils shall be remedied, and blessings, of the very nature of which I have the dimmest, darkest vision, introduced—can this feed me or give me drink? What, in all the world, can be at this moment so real as this hunger, or so important to me as its relief? We can talk afterwards of things spiritual. God has so made us, that one clamorous bodily want necessarily precludes every thought save that of its satisfaction. "He did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright." And for doing so he was "profane." Whenever we allow the present to overbear the future; whenever we suffer the body, with its appetites or its passions, to drown the voice of conscience, or obscure the vision of promise: whenever we prefer indulgence to duty, ease to exertion, self-interest to self-control, things temporal to things spiritual, the world to heaven, the present to the eternal—then we are profane. Whenever we argue—and who has never done so?—"What profit shall this birthright do me?" in the face of some immediate instant gratification; what substance is there, what certainty, in the recompense of the reward, that I should give up for its sake the opening for advancement, that offer of gain, that enjoyment of which I know the sweetness, that sin which arrays itself in every charm and bids me make sure of it, if I die for it?—then we are profane. We show that the consecrating mark is not upon us, or is faded, blurred, illegible; we are looking at things seen and temporal, and have no eye for the unseen and the eternal; like Esau, we are bartering birthright for pottage: like Esau, we are profane. Sometimes, as to him, the choice is presented in the form of a critical alternative. Human life has its decisive battles—its defeats or victories for hell or heaven. It has happened, probably, to many of the elder amongst us—to some also of the younger—to have had proposed to them a question which they felt at the time, or found afterwards, to involve in the answering the direction and destination of being. Such a choice, to some, has been the profession: to some, the bosom friendship; to some, the first visit to a theatre or race-course; to some, the home and the marriage. Decide the matter one way, and you have agreed—decide the matter the other way, and you have refused—to barter birthright for pottage. Decide the matter one way, and you are determined for heaven: decide the matter the other way, and, like Esau, you are profane. You have cancelled, you have obliterated, the consecration: you eat and drink, you rise up unaware, and go your way: but in God's sight you have despised your birthright. Sometimes the decision is made in a more direct, yet a more spiritual manner. God has drawn very nigh to you, in ordinance or in conscience—has "wakened your ear," in the night or at morning, with an almost audible call by name, like that of the sleeping child at Shiloh; and has offered to take you for His own. He has set before you vividly the sinfulness of sin, and the beauty of holiness; has bidden you awake to righteousness, and become, not almost, but altogether a Christian; and He has stood and waited for your reply. You could scarcely evade the peremptory demand—birthright or pottage, which? Heaven, with the struggles of faith and the reproach of Christ now, or the pleasures of sin for a season,

which? And according to the decision of that hour—for these calls, these shakes, these crises, come not often to any, come not twice to some men—according to the decision of that hour, you, you yourself, must be either a consecrated man, or else a profane—must either despise the birthright, or renounce for its sake the "savoury mess" of earth's proffering.[d]

7, 8. (7) **instruments**, schemes and plans for making money. **when . . right**, or as marg. *when he speaketh against the poor in judgment.* (8) **liberal**, or noble-minded. Some think the reference is to Hezekiah, and cite in illus. 2 Chr. xxx. 22–24. **stand**, or be confirmed.[a]

Whitefield and the churl.—While the Rev. G. Whitefield was preaching on one occasion at Plymouth, he lodged with Mr. Kinsman, a minister of the town. After breakfast on Monday, he said to his friend, "Come, let us visit some of your poor people. It is not enough that we labour in the pulpit; we must endeavour to be useful out of it." On entering the dwellings of the afflicted poor, he administered to their temporal as well as their spiritual wants. Mr. K., knowing the low state of his finances, was surprised at his liberality, and suggested that he thought he had been too bountiful. Mr. W., with some degree of smartness, replied, "It is not enough, young man, to pray, and put on a serious face; true religion and undefiled is this—to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to supply their wants. My stock, it is true, is nearly exhausted; but God, whom I serve, and whose saints we have assisted, will, I doubt not, soon give me a supply." His hopes were not disappointed. A stranger called on him in the evening, who addressed him thus: "With great pleasure I have heard you preach; you are on a journey, as well as myself, and travelling is expensive. Do me the honour to accept this," at the same time presenting him with five guineas. Returning to the family, Mr. Whitefield, smiling, held out the money in his hand, saying, "There, young man, God has speedily repaid what I bestowed. Let this in future teach you not to withhold what it is in the power of your hand to give. The gentleman to whom I was called is a perfect stranger to me; his only business was to give me the sum you see." It is remarkable that this gentleman, though rich, was notorious for a penurious disposition: but Elijah was fed by ravens.[b]

9–11. (9) **women . ease**, whose luxurious habits contributed very seriously to the existing evils. Comp. ch. iii. 16—26.[a] **careless**, as not apprehensive of the threatened and swift-coming dangers. (10) **many days**, lit. *days upon a year*, or a year in its revolutions.[b] (11) **strip**, *etc.*, the usual E. signs of grief, distress, and humiliation. The Prophet intimates that these troubles would come to them in the Assyrian invasion.

The Holy Land.—The barren appearance of it is not to be attributed to a defect either of the soil or the climate, but arises from the scantiness of its inhabitants, and the great oppression exercised by its rulers, which thus places a complete embargo on the labours of the husbandman, and tends to discourage him from using his activity. If these obstacles were removed, the whole country would still correspond with that glowing description of it which has been given in the Word of God, and be, as of old,

in an asylum."—*John Bate.*

d *Dr. C. J. Vaughan.*

a 2 Co. ix. 6.

v. 8. *Dr. J. Donne*, iii. 347; *Bp. Wilkins*, 289; *Sir A. Gordon*, i. 1; *J. Grant*, 3.

"Tell me, O ye powers,—for I'll be calm,—was I not worthy of your care? And why, ye gods, was virtue made to suffer, unless this world be but as fire, to purge her dross, that she may mount and be a star!"—*Lee.*

"Yet sure the gods are good: I would think so, if they would give me leave! But virtue in distress, and vice in triumph, make atheists of mankind."—*Dryden.*

"Scorn to trample upon a worm, or sneak to an emperor."—*Saadi.*

b *Cheever.*

a "The Prophet having reproved the sceptical and worldly spirit of the men of Jerusalem, passes on to censure the voluptuousness of the women."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Or, in little more than a year."—*Maurer.*

v. 11. *A. Shanks*, 258.

Wonderful alchemy of God's grace it is which

transmutes tribulation into triumph, turns waters of Marah into a healthful fountain, enables one to gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles, causes the rose to bloom through a whole winter of trials, and helps the soul to regard afflictions as promises and not threatenings.

c Rae Wilson.

"a land flowing with milk and honey." A stronger proof of its fertility cannot possibly be adduced than the striking fact that the country of Judæa alone, at one period, brought into the field more than "three hundred thousand, and at another two hundred and eighty thousand mighty men of valour," 2 Chron. xiv. 8. Again, the country of Judæa, where the vine grows spontaneously, was celebrated for the excellence of its vines. But the intolerance and despotism of the Turks, added to the rapacity of the Arabs, have blighted the produce of the vine, and rendered abortive all the influence of climate and fertility of that "Land of Vines." The unnatural prohibition of the use of wine, and that rigour by which such prohibition is enforced, has powerfully operated on the cultivation of it, and turned the treading of the wine-press into an odious and unprofitable task. But no traveller, writing on the very spot, could give a more exact representation of the state of Palestine than the words of the Prophet, "Many days and years shall ye be troubled: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come. They shall lament the pleasant and fruitful fields, and all the merry-hearted shall sigh."[c]

12, 13. (12) teats, or milk from the cows. Or the meaning may be *beating on the breasts*, as a sign of mourning.[a] pleasant fields, yielding abundant harvests, but soon to be made barren by advancing enemies. (13) briers and thorns, the signs of a desolated and neglected land.

Thorns and briers.—Thorns and briers are by no means a conspicuous feature in our landscape. The very gorse or furze is by many regarded as a stranger which has naturalised itself, and with its tender shoots, which in hard frosts feed the cattle, and its golden inflorescence, we would scarcely like to banish it. The blackthorn, with its early blossoms, answers to us the same purpose as did the fig or the almond tree in Palestine, and with its promise of summer near at hand is only a lesser favourite than the hawthorn, or May, which proclaims that summer has actually arrived. Even the bramble, with its cross tricks and creeping ways, redeems its character in autumn: and as they gather those grapes of the hedgerow, the blackberries, our children are ready to forgive the scratched arms and fingers which the gathering gives them. Were a prophet, therefore, to rise up, and by way of plague or judgment to foretell to England the general spread of such a vegetation, his words would not be particularly impressive. They would not be in keeping with our country and its characteristic productions. It was different in Palestine. There the ononis, with its long tough cables underground, and its keen lancets above, was a constant hindrance to the plough. And in a country where the most frequent of trees is the *zizyphus*, a scrubby, shockheaded ruffian, with trailing flexible twigs, carrying spines an inch or two long, each "as sharp as a needle, as hard as a bone," we can not only understand the frequent allusions to "thorns in the side," "thorns in the eyes," "a thorn in the flesh," "a thorn going up into the hand of a drunkard," but we can see what a terrible judgment it was, if the day could be foretold when these Philistines of the vegetable kingdom would win the battle, and repossess the goodly land.

14, 15. (14) palaces, or palace, *i.e.* of the king at Jerusalem.

a Gesenius.

"Ye shall knock upon your breasts."—*Coverdale.*

v. 13. *T. Arnold*, ii. 340.

vv. 13—15. *R. Hall*, vi. 158.

vv. 13—19. *S. Davies*, iii. 129.

"God is said to harden the heart when He withholds restraining grace—to harden when He does not soften. He is said to make blind when He does not enlighten, as freezing and darkness follow upon the absence of the sun, the source of light and heat." *Sutor.*

"To rejoice in the prosperity of another is to partake of it." *William Austin.*

[a] "The general

multitude, better, the crowded city. left, *i.e.* forsaken and silent. forts, *etc.*, the towers on the walls. dens, mere shelter places for the wild beasts. (15) spirit . . high, fig. for the returning mercy of God,[a] but suggestive of the day of Pentecost.

The outpouring of the Spirit (*v.* 15).—I. The blessing promised. 1. Its nature—mysterious, yet real and important ; 2. Its design—salvation of sinners through Christ ; 3. Its extent—gradually widening ; 4. Its necessity—the absolute and perfect failure of all other agency. II. The manner in which the Church must seek this blessing. 1. By rendering more conspicuous the distinction between the Church and the world ; 2. By healing the breaches of the Church—union ; 3. By active exertion—Christian work ; 4. By prayer—for ourselves, families, country, Church, and the world.[b]

Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.—What is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit? It is the doctrine of the interworking of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men. I have no philosophy about it. All I say is this : that God knows what is the secret way in which mind reaches mind. I do not—you do not. I do not know why words on my tongue wake up thoughts corresponding to those words in you. I do not know why the soul of man, like a complex instrument of wondrous scope, is played upon by my words, so that there are waked up in it notes along the whole scale of being. I do not understand why these things are so, but unquestionably they are so. I do not know how the mother pours her affection on the child's heart ; but she does. Two stars never shone into each other as two loving souls shine into each other. I know it is so, but I do not know why it is so. I do not know how soul touches soul, how thought touches thought, or how feeling touches feeling ; but I know it does. Now that which we see in the lower departments of life—that which exists between you and your friends, and me and my friends—that I take, and by my imagination I lift it up into the Divine nature, and give it depth and scope and universality ; and then I have some conception of the doctrine of God's Spirit poured upon the human soul.[c]

16, 17. (16) judgment, or equity : justice. dwell, or permanently abide. wilderness, in the country which was so long a wilderness. (17) work, or influence ; same as *effect*, or result. peace, internal and external.[a]

The work of righteousness is peace (*vv.* 16, 17).—We are told what shall be—I. The character of Gospel times. 1. Universal holiness ; 2. As an abiding habit. II. The fruit of Gospel experience—peace. 1. As the natural result of holy habits ; 2. As bringing with it the testimony of a good conscience ; 3. As being honoured with tokens of God's special approbation. Learn hence—(1) How to approve yourselves Christians indeed ; (2) How to be happy in your own souls.[b]

Peace.—Mr. Kidd, when minister of Queensferry, a few miles from Edinburgh, was one day very much depressed and discouraged for want of that comfort which is produced by the faith of the Gospel alone. He sent a note to Mr. L., minister of Culross, a few miles off, informing him of his distress of mind, and desired a visit as soon as possible. Mr. L. told the servant he was so busy that he could not wait upon his master, but desired him to tell Mr. K. to *remember Torwood!* When the

meaning is, until by a special Divine influence a total revolution shall take place in the character, and as a necessary consequence in the condition, of the people."—*J. A. Alexander.*

Is. xliv. 3, † ; Zec. xii. 10.

v. 15. *J. Alting, Op.* ii. pars. 4, 72.

b G. Brooks.

"What are our souls without His grace? As dead as the branch in which the sap circulates not. What is our Church without Him? As parched and barren as the fields without heaven's dew and rains. Where is the hope of the world's conversion, or of the salvation of dear loved ones, out of Christ? If the Spirit of God come not to our aid, our eyes may fail with looking for these much-valued blessings."—*Lewis.*

c H. W. Beecher.

a Is. liv. 13, 14.

v. 16. *T. W. Mossman*, 45.

v. 17. *Bp. Hall*, v. 187 ; *W. Adey*, 1 ; *Bp. Sandford*, ii. 208 ; *J. Morley*, 338 ; *T. Blackley*, iii. 18, 35 ; *J. C. Hare*, i. 325 ; *F. Sadlier*, ii. 45 ; *G. W. Lewis*, i. 83.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

"Fancy the bright sun saying, 'Now I must appear bright to-day ;' or the Atlantic saying, 'Well, to-day I must appear great.' Why, they are bright and great! *Be,*

and you will appear.—*Rev. Thos. Jones.*

c Whitecross.

a "In countries like Egypt the seed is put on the flooded land, but it would wash off, in the draining away of the waters, if the feet of the cattle did not make the surface uneven. Cattle are thus especially used in rice grounds."—So *Lowth.*

Ec. xi. 1.

v. 20. *S. T. Coleridge, Lay Sers.*

b H. Raikes, M.A.

"Let us not think the time wasted which is spent in introducing to Jesus those who, if they live, are to be the men and women of the coming generation, and who, if they die early, may be among the first to welcome us to our heavenly home."—*Biblical Treasury.*

c E. R. Barrett, B.A.

servant returned, he said to his master, "Mr. L. could not come, but desired me to tell you *to remember Torwood!*" This answer immediately struck Mr. K., and he cried out, "Yes, Lord! I will remember *Thee*, from the hill Mizar, and from the Hermonites!" All his trouble and darkness vanished, upon the recollection of a day which he had formerly spent in prayer along with Mr. L. in Torwood, where he had enjoyed eminent communion with God.[c]

18—20. (18) **peaceable habitation**, free from all fear of foes. "There is something tranquillising in the very sound of this delightful promise." (19) **hail**, an image of Divine judgments. **coming . . forest**, so as to overthrow it. **low . . place**, or utterly abased. Reference may be to the breaking up of the Jewish polity, and the peaceful security, at that time, of the Christian Church. (20) **sow . . waters**, fig. for the missionaries carrying the Gospel to all lands. **feet . . ass**, these animals were sent into the fields to prepare the soil for the seed.[a]

The blessedness of preaching the Gospel (*v.* 20).—Those who preach the Gospel to others are blessed in this work because—1. In thus acting they are instruments of God's mercy to man; 2. They promote the state of religion within themselves; 3. They secure the prayers of those who are brought to the knowledge of the Saviour by missionary efforts.[b]

After many days.—In 1835 Dr. Meadows, in making a journey along the coast of China, called for a few hours at a small island, where he distributed some tracts and small religious books. The island remained unvisited by any European for thirty-three years, when a missionary went thither and began to preach the Gospel. To his astonishment, one of his hearers said, "We know that doctrine;" and on being asked whence they had obtained their knowledge, the man replied: "Many years ago a foreigner came here and left some little books and other writings, which contained that doctrine which you preach. He gave them to my father, who charged me when dying to read them, and keep them carefully, and, perhaps, some day God would send some one who would teach us the doctrine more fully." The result of the seed sown by Dr. Meadows, thirty-three years before, was the formation of a church which speedily numbered sixty members, and is now in a healthy and thriving state. Surely these facts contain encouragement, not only for missionaries, but for tract distributors generally, and for all who are engaged in sowing the good seed of the kingdom.[c]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.

1. **thee that spoilest**, poss. Sennacherib, as representing the Assyrian power.[a] **dealest treacherously**, or wastest.[b] **shalt cease**, as if you had completed your work.

Victims of treachery.—In the year 1784 the captain of a vessel trading on the coast of Africa went up the country, where he was introduced to a Moorish king. This prince being pleased with the polite manners of the English, entertained them with great civility, and at last reposed so much confidence in the captain as to entrust him with a son, about eighteen years of age, and another fine youth, to be brought to England for educa-

a "The proud and false Assyrian justly reckoned with for all his fraud and violence, and laid under a woe."—*Matthew Henry.*

Is. xxi. 2.

b "Violence and treachery are the

tion. The captain promised to protect them; but basely sold them for slaves. Fortunately for the two princes their betrayer died on his passage home, and the officers related the circumstance when they arrived. On hearing this, Government sent to pay their ransom; and on their being brought to England, they were placed under the care of the Earl of Halifax, who caused them to be kindly treated, and well educated. They were afterwards introduced to his majesty, and proved themselves worthy of the kindness they experienced. These facts gave rise to a short poem, supposed to be addressed from the prince in England, to Zara at his father's court, from which we select a passage:

"The wretch, the sordid hypocrite, that sold
His charge, an unsuspecting prince, for gold,
That justice marked, whose eyes can never sleep,
And death commission'd smote him on the deep.
The generous crew their port in safety gain,
And tell my mournful tale, nor tell in vain;
The king with horror of th' atrocious deed,
In haste commanded, and the slave was freed.
No more Britannia's cheek, the blush of shame,
Burns for my wrongs, her king restores her fame.
Propitious gales to Freedom's happy shore
Waft me triumphant, and the prince restore."[c]

crying sins of arbitrary powers."—*J. A. Alexander.*

vv. 1–6. *J. Alting, Op.* ii. pars. 4, 74.

"O for a tongue to curse the slave whose treason, like a deadly blight, comes o'er the councils of the brave to blast them in their hour of might!"—*Thos. Moore.*

As an unbeliever, you cannot be grateful to Christ for what you have not received, nor be thankful for blessings which you do not even know.

c Percy Anec.

2—4. (2) **waited for thee,** as ch. xxvi. 8. **arm,** on wh. they may lean during the long waiting time.[a] (3) **the tumult,** Jehovah's approach is likened to an advancing thunderstorm. **people,** or peoples: the armies made up of confederate peoples. (4) **your spoil,** addressed to the Assyrians.[b] **running . . locusts,** wh. swiftly devour the vegetation on wh. they alight. The Jews spoiled Sennac.'s forsaken camp.

Gladness of salvation.—Is hope sweet where despair had almost begun to reign? Is it a joy to be emancipated from a shameful slavery, or set free from a noxious dungeon? Is it gladness to be raised, as if by miracle, from a bed of feebleness and suffering to sudden health and instantaneous vigour? Then what a gladness must salvation be! For, as there is no earthly misery like sin, so is there no deliverance like that with which Jesus makes us free. Words will not tell it. Thought only can think it, and it must be thought out of an enlightened mind and a burning heart, dwelt on for a long, long while.[c]

a "The security of those times is the effect of the treasure, the wealth in treasures of salvation."—*Nägelsbach.*

b C. Simeon, M.A. v. 6. *Bp. Shipley,* ii. 257; *B. Beldome,* viii. 62; *J. Styles,* i. 1; *R. Nares,* 272; *Bp. Van Mildert,* i. 300; *Syd. Smith,* i. 53; *E. Miller,* 49; *J. Johnson,* ii. 156.

5, 6. (5) **exalted,** in His judgment of the oppressor; and as the proved defender of His people. (6) **wisdom,** put for piety. **knowledge,** or right apprehension of God. **fear . . treasure,**[a] *lit.* the fear of the Lord, that is his treasure. If the general reference be to Sennac., then this *v.* must be applied to Hezekiah.

The use and excellency of true wisdom (*v.* 6).—I. Consider wisdom as promoting the stability of an empire. II. As advancing the prosperity of the soul. It is a mine of wealth. 1. Intellectual: 2. Moral: 3. Spiritual; 4. Eternal.[b]

Our wisdom under differing circumstances.—It is a wise thing to exhibit prudence and hopefulness in their proper degrees and seasons. Some are so exultant at success as to become rash, and thereby secure for themselves a disaster: others are so depressed by a defeat as to be incapable of future action. The old Latin distich is worth quoting:

> "*Si modo victus eras, ad crastina bella parato;*
> *Si modo victor eras, ad crastina bella pareto.*"
>
> "If conquer'd, for to-morrow's fight prepare:
> If conqueror, of to-morrow's fight beware."

When we are most unsuccessful in our Lord's work we should rally all our forces for new attempts, hoping that the tide will turn, and believing that to perseverance the crown is certain. On the other hand, when the Lord favours us with the largest degree of blessing we must watch with holy anxiety lest by any negligence or sin we should grieve the Holy Spirit, and so forfeit all hope of future triumph.[c]

7—9. (7) **valiant ones**, or messengers. Reference is to the alarm and distress of Judæa during the Assyrian invasion. Messengers sent to sue for peace are rejected. **weep bitterly**, &c. of the failure of their overtures.[a] "Their weeping is agreed by all interpreters to be in strict accordance with the ancient usage." (8) **wayfaring**, or traveller. The roads were not safe for such.[b] **he . . covenant**, reference is to Sennac.'s breaking his treaty with Hezekiah. **despised the cities**, contemning the defences. (9) **Sharon**,[c] the fruitful plain between Carmel and Joppa. **Bashan**, range of hills on N.E.

Footprints of the Creator.—A French sceptic, a man of some learning, was crossing the Great Sahara, in company with an Arab guide. He noticed, with a sneer, that at certain times the guide, whatever obstacles might arise, put them all aside, and, kneeling on the burning sands, called on his God. Day after day passed, and still the Arab never failed; till at last, one evening, when he rose from his knees, the philosopher asked him, with a contemptuous smile, "How do you know there is a God?" The guide fixed his eye on the scoffer for a moment in wonder, and then said solemnly, "How do I know that a man, and not a camel, passed my hut last night in the darkness? Was it not by the print of his feet in the sand? Even so," and he pointed to the sun, whose last rays were flashing over the lonely desert, "that footprint is not of man."

10—12. (10) **rise**, as one about to act. Jehovah represents Himself as aroused by His people's misery. The emphasis is on the adverb *now*. (11) **conceive chaff**, your plans shall prove worthless as chaff. **your breath**, or rage, this would lead them to act in ways wh. would secure their own destruction. (12) **people**, or nations composing Sennac.'s army. **thorns cut up, burning** swiftly and fiercely.[a]

Thorns cut up.—Here, on the brow of this rocky hill, we have the lime-kilns, and men in the very act of breaking up sarcophagi to feed them. It is unpardonable sacrilege thus to destroy these venerable antiquities. It is outrageous Vandalism. Instead of hurling anathemas at these barbarians, we had better drop a tear of compassion over such ignorance, and then see if we cannot draw some lesson of instruction from even these destructive kilns. You see an immense quantity of this low, matted thorn-bush collected around them. That is the fuel with which the lime is burned. And thus it was in the days of Isaiah. "The people," says he, "shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire." Those people among the rocks yonder are cutting up thorns with their mattocks and

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There are three things which can in no wise be used for good—malice, envy, and folly; and there are three things that can by no means be employed for evil—humility, contentment, and liberality.
c C. H. Spurgeon.

a Comp. 2 Ki. xviii. 14—16, 18.

b Comp. Ju. v. 6.

c "A beautiful poetical amplification of the description. The most magnificent and fruitful scenes of nature are represented as converted into barrenness and desolation."—*Henderson.*

The omniscience of God is a great check to sin, and motive to virtue. A heathen philosopher advised his pupils to imagine that some distinguished character was always looking at them, as the best aid to excellence of life.

a "In Palestine the low matted thorns are cut up with mattocks and hooks to be burnt in the lime-kilns near the spot where they grow."—*Thomson.*
"There would seem to be a confirmation here of the view that the Assyrian army was consumed by a hot pestilential wind from the Lord, in the valley of Hinnom, on the S. of Jerusalem."—*Wordsworth.*
"Burnings of lime in a lime-kiln, of which

pruning-hooks, and gathering them into bundles to be burned in these burnings of lime. It is a curious fidelity to real life, that, when the thorns are merely to be destroyed, they are never cut up, but set on fire where they grow. They are only cut up for the lime-kiln.[b]

13, 14. (13) **far off . . near**, poetical for everybody: all without exception.[a] **my might**, in the overthrow of Sennacherib. (14) **sinners**, those who doubted that God would deliver. **hypocrites**, or profane ones. The wicked and unbelieving portion of the Jews, who were awestruck at the signs of Divine power. **devouring fire**, common symbol of Divine judgment. Further indicating the destruction of Sennac.'s army by a blast. **among us**, the privileged people of God, who are under yet deeper responsibilities. **everlasting**,[b] a fig. of extreme intensity; Divine, eternal burnings.

A country minister.—A minister having to preach from that solemn passage, Isa. xxxiii. 14, began his discourse thus: "The application of a sermon is usually at the close of it; but were we for once to apply the subject at the beginning, it would probably increase our seriousness, and render all the rest of the sermon more useful. Let us then put the latter part of the words to ourselves; and ask 'Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire?' Shall any of us? Is it not probable that some of us shall? And if so, which of us? Where do the persons sit? In the galleries, or below? Methinks each of you is saying, 'Is it I? Is it I?' Ah! could we point out the individual, and say, Thou art the man! Thou art the woman! how would every eye be fixed on that unhappy person; and how would the individual feel! Now, though it is not for us to speak in this manner to any one person, yet we may clearly point out, from the Scriptures of truth, who it is that, without 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' must indeed dwell with everlasting burnings. May the Holy Spirit so assist us in this important inquiry, that many may be stirred up to flee from the wrath to come!"[c]

15, 16. (15) **walketh**, *etc.*, this is the confident answer to the question of the prev. *v.* The truly God-fearing man is not troubled by the presence of Divine judgments.[a] **shaking . . bribes**, expressive gesture of indignant refusal.[b] **hearing of blood**, schemes of violence and murder. **seeing evil**, or conniving at it. (16) **on high**, safe up out of tumult and danger. **munitions of rocks**, strongholds or sure refuges. Fastnesses. He hides safe in God's promises. **water . . sure**, even in times of national calamity. Waters from a perennial fountain.[c]

Protection promised to the godly (*v.* 16).—I. The character to whom the promise is made. 1. He is sincere in his profession of religion; 2. He is consistent in the practice of it. II. The promise itself. 1. Protection; 2. Provision. Address—(1) Those who rest in presumptuous hopes; (2) Those who are agitated with unbelieving fears.[d]

The munitions of rocks.—He setteth them on high, that no ladders can be found long enough to scale these rocks, not any artillery or engine strong enough to batter them down. And lest any should say, But we will hold the siege till we starve

the peculiarity is that all seem to be on fire together."—*Mat. Henry.*

b Dr. Thompson.

a Barnes.

b Henderson thinks the words have no meaning if there be not implied reference to eternal punishment.

"Who can dwell wi'h His neverrela ing holiness?" — *Spk. Com.*

v. 14. *Jon. Edwards*, ii. 201.

"Gentleness or lenity is a virtue by which God preserves moderation concerning anger in taking vengeance, lest it should be too vehement — lest the severity of the anger should certainly correspond with the magnitude of the wickedness perpetrated." —*Arminius.*

c R. T. S.

a Comp. Ps. xv., xxiv.

b "Won't receive any, but when they are put into his hands, shakes them out."—*Gill.*

c Ps. xxxiv. 10.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

God eternally loves His own image; and if He eternally loves His own image, He must for ever hate that which defaced it.

e Caryl.

"As a skilful

painter fills the background of his picture with opposite colours, that he may give a more prominent view to the chief parts of his painting; so God has introduced the ascending smoke of hell's torments, and the black clouds of Sinai's fiery law in the Gospel, to give a brighter aspect to the Cross, which is the main scene in the Gospel picture; and to attract more powerfully the hearts of men." —*John Bate.*

f *Cheever.*

a "Thine eyes shall see the Shechinah of the king of ages."—*Targum.*

b Comp. Ps. xxvii. 4, lxiii. 2; Is. xxxviii. 11.

"Reference is to the free access of country Jews to the temple when the Assyrian army was destroyed." — *Henderson.*

c "Representing Policy, Finance, and Military Art."—*Schmieder.*

d "The Assyrian was a foreign dialect, though of the same semitic family with the Hebrew."—*Wordsworth.*

e *Stems and Twigs.*

v. 17. *T. Reeve*, 1; *B. Beddome*, vii. 165; *J. H. Newman*, v. 1, 15, 33, 53; *H. E. Manning*, iii. 431.

them out, it follows in the text, "Bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure." I remember a story in Alexander's wars, that when he came to besiege the Sogdians, a people who dwelt upon a rock, or had the literal munition of rocks for their defence, they jeered him, and asked him whether his soldiers had wings or no. "Unless your soldiers can fly in the air, we fear you not." It is a most certain truth, when God exalts a people, He can set them upon a rock so high that unless their adversaries have wings, and those more than eagles' wings, to soar higher than God Himself, they are beyond annoyance. He carries His own upon eagles' wings; what wings, then, must they have who get above His people!*e*—*The bankrupt's entertainment.*—Dr. Franklin relates the following anecdote of Mr. Denham, an American merchant, with whom he once went a passenger to England. "He had formerly," he says, "been in business at Bristol, had failed in debt to a number of people, compounded, and went to America; there, by a close application to business as a merchant, he acquired a plentiful fortune in a few years. Returning to England in the ship with me, he invited his old creditors to an entertainment, at which he thanked them for the easy compensation they had favoured him with; and when they expected nothing but the treat, every man, at the first remove, found under his plate an order on a banker for the full amount of the unpaid remainder, with interest."*f*

17—19. (17) **king . . beauty**,*a* reference is to the glory of Jehovah as appearing in His temple, the defence of His Church.*b* **far off**, *i.e.* the Jews, when delivered, would be free to travel. (18) **meditate terror**, or think seriously on the recent judgment, so as to learn solemn lessons from it. **scribe . . receiver**, *etc.*, these are the officials of Sennac.'s army, who made so sure of spoiling Jerusalem.*c* Where are they now? (19) **not see**, *i.e.* not actually within your city as conquerors. **stammering**, or ridiculous; **barbarous**.*d* So languages seem which we do not understand.

The seeing and the sight (*v.* 17).—I. The eyes. 1. Eyes that have been shut to evil; 2. That have delighted in every manifestation of evil; 3. That have been well employed; 4. That were often filled with tears; 5. Glorified eyes. II. The seeing. 1. See without interruption: 2. Without weariness or weakness; 3. Without curiosity: 4. Without disappointment; 5. Without insensibility. III. The sight. Christ shall be seen—1. With beauty of countenance; 2. In His beautiful garments; 3. Surrounded by those beautified with salvation; 4. Crowned with many crowns.*e*

Far away.—

Up the shore
Of Evermore
We sport like children at their play:
And gather shells
Where sinks and swells
The mighty sea from far away.
Upon that beach,
Nor voice nor speech
Doth things intelligible say;
But through our souls
A whisper rolls
That comes to us from far away.

Into our ears
The voice of years
Comes deeper, deeper, day by day;
We stoop to hear
As it draws near,
Its awfulness from far away.

At what it tells
We drop the shells
We were so full of yesterday,
And pick no more
Upon that shore,
But dream of brighter far away.

And o'er that tide,
Far out and wide,
The yearning of our souls doth stray;
We long to go
We do not know
Where it may be, but far away.

The mighty deep
Doth slowly creep
Upon the shore where we did play;
The very sand
Where we did stand
A moment since, swept far away.

Our playmates all,
Beyond our call,
Are passing hence, as we too, may,
Unto that shore
Of Evermore,
Beyond the boundless far away.

We'll trust the wave
And Him to save,
Beneath whose feet as marble lay
The rolling deep,
For He can keep
Our souls in that dim far away.[f]

Jeremy Bentham mentions that the current of his thoughts and studies was directed for life by a single phrase that caught his eye at the end of a pamphlet—"The greatest good of the greatest number."

"Arminians who have received a ray of Gospel light, desert their ranks frequently; but a Calvinist will never leave his standard; he dies at the foot of his colours. A clear sight of grace is so exceeding glorious, it keeps the heart steady to the doctrines."—*Berridge.*

There was an ancient custom of putting an hour-glass into the coffin of the dead to signify that their time had run out, a useless notification to them. Better put the hour-glass into the hand of every living man, and show them the grains gliding steadily out. Soon all will be gone.

f Frazer's Mag.

20. our solemnities, ch. i. 14. **tabernacle, or tent. stakes,** by which the tent ropes were fastened.[a] Terms borrowed from the nomadic life.

The city of our solemnities (v. 20).—I. The object of contemplation—Zion symbolical of the residence of the living God; the place of holy convocations. II. The contemplation of the object. 1. To the worldling; 2. To the awakened penitent; 3. To the believer; 4. A prayer to God Himself, to look upon Zion, etc.[b]

A citizen saint.—According to the legend, Omobuono was a merchant of Cremona, who had received from his father but little school-learning; yet, from the moment he entered on the management of his own affairs, a wisdom more than human seemed to inspire every action of his life. Diligent and thrifty, his stores increased daily, and, with his possessions, his almost boundless charity. Nor did his charity consist merely in giving his money in alms, nor in founding hospitals, but in the devotion of his whole heart towards relieving the sorrows as well as the necessities of the poor, and in exhorting and converting to re-

a "The peculiar beauty of the imagery lies in ascribing permanence to a tent, which, from its very nature, must be movable. This may either imply a previous state of agitation and instability, or that the Church, though weak in herself, should be strengthened and established by the power of God."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b W. Jay.

Is. xxvi. 1—3; Ps. cxxv. 1, 2.

v. 20. *T. Spencer*, 196; *Dr. W. Whewell*, 324.

"When the heart of man is sound in conversion, then his life will be true in confession."—*Gospel Treasury.*

c *Mrs. Jameson.*

"Some rivers, as historians tell us, pass through others without mingling with them; just so should a saint pass through this world."—*Venning.*

a "He is our fortification, our moat, and our river. Other cities, like Nineveh and Babylon, are protected by broad dykes and streams."—*Wordsworth.*

b Comp. Nah. iii. 8.

c "This beautiful triplet expresses the confidence of the Church in the government and protection of Jehovah."—*Henderson.*

v. 22. *P. Bland*, 173; *Dr. Alex. Gerard*, ii. 239; *Dr. H. Draper*, i. 513.

d *Beta* in 400 Sks.

"As there are no fruits before there is a tree, so works cannot be good unless the person be first righteous and good."—*N. Caussin.*

"How must yearn our Lord's deep Heart of Love when saints are weeping! He whose creative Breath first gave flowers unto earth, each tear

pentance those who had been led into evil courses. Neither did this good saint think it necessary to lead a life of celibacy. He was married to a prudent and virtuous wife, who was sometimes uneasy lest her husband's excessive bounty to the poor should bring her children to beggary; but it was far otherwise. Omobuono increased daily in riches and prosperity, so that the people of the city believed that his stores were miraculously multiplied. It is related of him, that being on a journey with his family, and meeting some poor pilgrims who were ready to faint by the wayside with hunger and thirst, he gave them freely all the bread and wine he had provided for his own necessities; and, going afterwards to fill his empty wine-flasks from a running stream, the water, when poured out, proved to be most excellent wine; and his wallet was found full of wheaten bread, supplied by the angels in lieu of that which he had given away. As the life of Omobuono had been in all respects most blessed, so was his death; for one morning, being at his early devotions in the Church of St. Egidio, and kneeling before a crucifix, just as the choir were singing the *Gloria in excelsis* he stretched out his arms in the form of a cross, and in this attitude expired. He was canonised by Pope Innocent III. on the earnest petition of his fellow-citizens.[c]

21, 22. (21) **glorious Lord**, or Jehovah shall be mighty for us, as our defence.[a] **broad . . streams**, Jerusalem had no encircling rivers, but the care of Jehovah would be better than moats.[b] **galley**, boat propelled by oars. **gallant ship**, vessel of burden; both used in hostile sense, as war vessels. (22) **judge**, *etc.*,[c] note that the Divine name is placed first for the sake of emphasis.

The Gospel Church (*v.* 21).—I. The peace and tranquillity of the Church of God, from—1. The character of its Governor; 2. The peaceful tempers of its inhabitants; 3. The security of its fortifications; 4. The destruction of its enemies. II. Its permanency and security. The tabernacle was—1. Of heavenly origin; 2. Its artificers Divinely inspired; 3. It exhibited tokens of the Divine glory. III. The nature of the supplies afforded to us. 1. They are Divine; 2. Abundant; 3. Inexhaustible: 4. Near, unmolested. Apply:—The doctrine of the text should—(1) Induce gratitude; (2) Inspire confidence; (3) Excite expectation.[d]

Gospel duties and consolations.—The Rev. Dr. Mason, of New York, was requested to visit a lady in dying circumstances in that city, who, together with her husband, openly avowed infidel principles, though they attended his ministry. On approaching her bedside, he asked if she felt herself a sinner, and her need of a Saviour. She frankly told him she did not, and that she believed the doctrine of a Mediator to be all a farce. "Then," said the doctor, "I have no consolation for you, not one word of comfort. There is not a single passage in the Bible that warrants me to speak peace to one who rejects the Mediator provided; you must take the consequences of your infidelity. He was on the point of leaving the room, when one said, "Well, if you cannot speak consolation to her, you can pray for her." To this he assented, and kneeling down by the bedside, prayed for her as a guilty sinner just sinking into hell; and then, arising from his knees, he left the house. To his great surprise, a day or two

after, he received a message from the lady herself, earnestly desiring that he would come down and see her, and that without delay. He immediately obeyed the summons. But what was his amazement, when, on entering the room, she held out her hand to him, and said with a benignant smile, "It is all true—all that you said on the Sabbath is true. I have seen myself the wretched sinner you described me to be in prayer. I have seen Christ to be that all-sufficient Saviour you said He was; and God has mercifully snatched me from that abyss of infidelity in which I was sunk, and placed me on that Rock of Ages. There I am secure: there I shall remain—*I know whom I have believed.*" The doctor's prayer, through the Divine blessing, fastened on her mind; she was convinced of her guilty state, and enabled to rest wholly on the Saviour; and after solemnly charging her husband to educate their daughter in the fear of God, she expired in the exercise of joy and peace of believing.[c]

23, 24. (23) **tacklings**, prob. this *v.* refers to Assyria, and carries on the fig. of the ship in *v.* 21.[a] **loosed**, cast loose by the sailors. **mast**, or *cross-beam*. The fittings are represented as broken by the Divine storm that discomfits them. **lame**, *etc.*, a fine poetical touch, indicating how utterly the spoil was left at the disposal of anybody. (24) **inhabitant**, of Jerusalem.[b] In the day of Divine deliverance and gracious rule. Reference may be in part to Hezekiah's recovery from sickness.

Encouragement to the weak (*v.* 23).—Note the history in the context. I. How it was fulfilled on the occasion referred to. II. How it is fulfilling at this time. 1. Still are the weak triumphant through the power and grace of God. Are any weak in understanding, in grace, in faith? III. How it shall be fulfilled in the millennial age. Behold then—1. What encouragement is here given to serve the Lord; 2. What honour will be given to the Saviour at the last day.[c]

Divine comfort.—Mr. Cargill was under very deep convictions of sin before his entry into the ministry, and while a student; and that, with grievous temptations and fiery darts mixed in with it, and his too great reservedness, and not communicating his case to such as might have given him counsel and support under it, drove him to terrible excesses; in short, he came to the very height of despair; and, through indulging melancholy, and hearkening to temptations, he at length came to the resolution of putting an end to his miserable life. He was then living with his father or some relation, in the parish of Bothwell, and in the horrible hurry of these fiery darts, he went out once or twice to the river of Clyde, with a dreadful resolution to drown himself. He was still diverted by somebody or other coming by him, which prevented his design at that time. But the temptation continuing, and his horror by yielding to it increasing, he fell upon a method, in the execution of which he thought he should not be prevented. On a summer morning, very early, he went from the house where he dwelt to a more unfrequented place, where there were some old coal pits, and on coming up to one of them, was fully determined to throw himself in; but when very near it a thought struck him that the coat and vest he had upon him being new might be of some use to others, though he was unworthy to live, and deserved to be in hell; and so he stepped back and threw them off, and then came up to the very brink of the pit; and when will save, and smile it to a pearl in Heaven's sure keeping." — *Anon.*

The chief secret of comfort lies in not suffering trifles to vex one, and in cultivating small pleasures, since very few great ones are let on long leases.

e Whitecross.

a "Like a proud ship of war, she tries to sail up this stream of Divine protection, wh. guards Jerusalem, but she has been wrecked, and her cargo strews the shore.... and the inhabitants of Jerus., whom she despised, gather up the booty of the proud invader." — *Wordsworth.*

b "This is the evang. Prophet's anticipation of Him who said to the sick man, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee.'" — *Sir E. Strachey.*

r 24. *J. Jowett*, 169; *F. Close*, ii. 217.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"Comfort — 'tis for ease and quiet: it sleeps upon the down of sweet content, in the sound bed of industry and health."—*Havard.*

Trust not so much to the comforts of God, as to the God of

comforts. The greatest temptation Satan hath for the Christian is his comforts.

d Prof. Woodrow.

just going to leap in, these words entered his mind, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." He said it came with that power and life upon his spirit which it was impossible for him to express, and he did not know whether it was by an immediate impression on his mind, or a direct voice from heaven (which last he was inclined to think), but it had such an evidence and energy accompanying it as at once put an end to all his fears and doubts, and which he could no more resist than he could do the light of a sunbeam darting upon his eye.[d]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

a Ps. xlix. 1.

b "This suggests the several ideas of contemptuous neglect, of a multitude too vast to be interred, and perhaps of survivors too few to perform the duty." —*J. A. Alexander.*

c Syd. Smith, ii. 67.

c Johnson.

1—3. (1) **nations**, all peoples are to be instructed by God's dealings with and for His people.[a] (2) **all nations . . armies**, so far as they are found opposing the Divine plans. (3) **cast out**,[b] as was the case with Sennac.'s army before Jerusalem. **stink**, Joel ii. 20. **melted . . blood**, as they are washed down by rains.

Destinies of Providence.—

How Heaven, in scorn of human arrogance,
Commits to trivial chance the fate of nations!
While with incessant thought laborious man
Extends his mighty schemes of wealth and power,
And towers and triumphs in ideal greatness,
Some accidental gust of opposition
Blasts all the beauties of his new creation,
O'erturns the fabric of presumptuous reason,
And whelms the swelling architect beneath it.[c]

a Mat. xxiv. 29; 2 Pe. iii. 7—10; Re. vi. 13, 14.

b "Prob. allusion to the phenomena of storms, in wh. the sky is first overcast, and then covered with clouds, the motion of which gives it the appearance of being rolled together." —*J. D. Michaelis.*
c Gorrie.

4. **host . . dissolved**, the usual poetical figures for a day of the Lord, when His power is manifested.[a] **rolled . . scroll**, fig. from the books of the period.[b] **leaf . . vine**, when the vine is stricken with frost or blight.

The fall of the leaf.—Reference is here made to the interesting fact that a vine leaf has a peculiar mode of falling. Attached by cellular tissue to the stem, it separates easily therefrom when the time of falling comes; and its long, thick, and heavy footstalk prevents it from twirling in the breeze like other and hollow leaves; and falling in a vertical line, it alights on the ground with a hollow clash, having a startling effect in a calm and quiet day, and differing widely from the rustling sound, so common in woodlands, at the season styled "the fall of the leaf."[c]

a "Edom was the ancient and inveterate enemy of the Jews."—*Henderson.*
Nu. xx. 14—21; Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Ob. 10—15.

b "Bathed as in the wine of God's fury, and made drunken." —*Mat. Arnold.*

c "Type of those who, belonging

5, 6. (5) **for**, *etc.*, now begins the specific sentence against Edom, the only other hostile nation against wh. it was necessary to pronounce a Divine sentence.[a] **sword . . bathed**, lit. *satiated*, or *inebriated*.[b] **Idumæa**, Edom.[c] (6) **fat . . rams**, the slaughter of the people of Edom is described under the fig. of a great sacrifice. **Bozrah**, the chief city of Edom. Now *El Busaireh*, in the mountainous region S.E. of the Dead Sea, halfway between it and Petra.[d]

Idumæa as it is, a testimony to the truth of Scripture.—The publication, in 1838, by Laborde and Linant, of their great work, *Voyage de l'Arabie Petrée*, with its splendid engravings, has presented before the mind a bird's-eye view of the utter desola-

tion of the country of Esau, such as would be beyond the power of mere verbal description. The topographical view of the land, taken from El Nakb, gives at a glance a most striking view of the land of Edom as it is, "most desolate," the "desolation of desolations," a once fertile region made bare, the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness stretched over it. When He whose prerogative it is to define the bounds of our habitation gave to Esau his inheritance, it was thus described through the lips of the patriarch Isaac:—"Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and the dews of heaven from above;" and that it was such a land the allusions and descriptions of the Book of Job give abundant evidence (Job xix. 23, 24, xxxi. 35, 36, xiii. 26). It was a land exalted as high as wealth and art could raise it, the abode of a high state of civilisation and commerce, and a country in which the arts had made considerable progress (Job xxxiii. 1—11). But the sons of Edom transgressed, and woes were denounced against them and their territory, which have been as strikingly fulfilled as those beneath whose tremendous weight Nineveh, and Babylon, and Tyre, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum lie prostrate and forgotten. "Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will make thee most desolate. Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity" (Ezek. xxxv. 3, 5). Now "wisdom is departed from Teman, and understanding has perished out of the mount of Esau," and the wanderers in that region are sunk in the grossest folly, regarding the ruins around them as the work of evil spirits (Obadiah 8). Travellers assert that the minds of the Bedouins are as bare and uncultivated as the deserts they traverse. "Our sheikh, Hassan," says Dr. Robinson, "had never known a Bedouin who could read; he had only heard that there were some in the far east."

7, 8. (7) **unicorns,** prob. *rhinoceros,* or *buffaloes, wild oxen.*[a] **soaked,** comp. *bathed. v.* 5. **fatness,** *i.e.* enriched by the decaying bodies of the slain.[b] (8) **vengeance,** ch. lxiii. 4. **controversy of Zion,** *i.e.* God arises to plead for Zion.[c]

Idumæa (continued).—Edom lies in the directest route to India. "None shall pass through it for ever" (Isa. xxxiv. 10): but Captains Irby and Mangles tell us that the Arabs about Akaba are a very bad people, notorious robbers, and at war with all others. Even other tribes of Arabs are afraid to enter, or conduct any within its borders, and the people who occasionally visit it are described as most savage and treacherous as was foretold (Mal. i. 4). "Verily there is a God which judgeth in the earth." The desolation of the land is utter and perpetual; a terrible monument of the Divine displeasure against wickedness and idolatry. The whole land now lies under a curse; the ruins of its cities of rock, and the remains of architectural skill and ingenuity, attest its former greatness, while they set forth the solemn fact that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God: for our God is a consuming fire."

9, 10. (9) **pitch,** fig. taken from destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.[a] "The literal Edom extended from the S.E. shore of the Dead Sea, the tomb of the cities of the plain."[b] (10) **not be quenched,**[c] *comp.* **Jude 7. smoke,** *etc.,* Re. xviii. 18, **xix. 3.**

to the seed of promise, forfeited their privileges."—*Spk. Com.*

a Ge. xxxvi. 33. "Give me the comforts of God, and I can well bear the taunts of men. Let me lay my head on the bosom of Jesus, and I fear not the distraction of care and trouble. If my God will give me ever the light of His smile, and glance His benediction, it is enough. Come on, foes, persecutors, fiends, ay, Apollyon himself; for 'the Lord God is my sun and shield.' Gather, ye clouds, and environ me, I carry a sun within; blow, wind of the frozen north, I have a fire of living coal within; yea, death, slay me, but I have another life, a life in the light of God's countenance."—*Spurgeon.*

a Job xxxix. 9

b Virgil says that Rom. blood had twice enriched the soil of Macedonia.

c "To assert the rights of the true city of God against all that harass her."—*Spk. Com.*

Who spends before he thrives, will beg before he thinks.

a Is. xiii. 19; De. xxix. 23, 24.

b Wordsworth.

c Travelling

through Edom. *Volney* speaks of 30 deserted towns within three days' journey.

Comp. Is. lxvi. 24.

"The greatest temptation the devil has for a Christian is comfort."—*Luther.*

Idumæa (continued).—Dr. Wilson thus describes the grandeur and terror of the new and wonderful scene as he viewed it from Mount Hor :—"We were seated on the very throne, as it appeared to me, of desolation. Its own metropolis of broken, and shattered, and frowning heights—ruin piled upon ruin, and dark and devouring depth added to depth—lay on our right hand and on our left. To the rising sun, Mount Seir, the pride and the glory of Edom, and the terror of its adversaries, lay before us, smitten in its length and breadth by the hand of the Almighty stretched out against it; barren and most desolate, with its daughter, 'the city of the rock,' overthrown and prostrate at its feet. To the west we had the great and terrible wilderness, with its deserts, and pits, and droughts, spread out before us, without any limit but its own vastness, and pronounced by God Himself to be the very 'shadow of death'" (Jer. ii. 6).

11—13. (11) cormorant, or *pelican :* Heb. *kaath.*[a] bittern, ch. xiv. 23. owl, better, heron or crane.[b] line of confusion, "the measuring-line and measuring-weights of ruin and desolation."[c] (12) nobles, fr. whom the Edomite kings were elected. (13) dragons, Heb. *tannim.* prob. *jackals.*[d] owls, or *ostriches.* Creatures noted for their melancholy howl.

Idumæa (continued).—Dr. Robinson finding himself on the "rolling desert of Arabah," says,—"A more frightful desert it had hardly been our lot to behold. Now and then a lone shrub of the Ghudah was almost the only trace of vegetation. The mountains beyond presented a most uninviting and hideous aspect: precipices and naked conical peaks of chalky and gravelly formation rising one above another without a sign of life or vegetation." True, after stumbling over many gullcys, they met with a fountain, of which he says, "The water was sweet, but, like all desert fountains, had a sickly hue, as if it could bless nothing with fertility." All modern travellers unite in the declaration that it is one broad plain of barrenness and desolation, and that its present state could not be more graphically described than it is in the words of the prophetic writers. "These portray," says Dr. Olin, "a state of desolation and ruin the most absolute and irretrievable, such as probably no portion of the globe once populous and fertile now exhibits." The fearful denunciations of the Prophets against this once rich and beautiful region and its highly civilised inhabitants, and their fulfilment, furnish an invulnerable argument in favour of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. In the words of a modern writer, "Read here in the word of prophecy what desolations are foretold,—look there, over the land of Edom, how all is fulfilled, and can you but confess that this book is from God?"

14, 15. (14) wild beasts, Is. xiii. 21, 22. Heb. *tsûm,* and *iyyim.*[a] satyr, or shaggy he-goat; screech owl, or night monster. Heb. *Lileth,* from *lil.* night.[b] The terrors of a wild desert region are poetically represented. We need not regard the Prophet as accepting the wild and superstitious legends that have gathered round this word *lileth.* (15) great owl, or the arrow-snake. lay . . shadow, quite undisturbed by any passers by.[c] mate, indicating settlement in the district for breeding purpose.

The satyr.—A supposed fabulous animal is twice mentioned in Isaiah, in predicting the desolation of Babylon and Idumæa. It

a Le. xi. 18; De. xiv. 17; Ps. cii. 6.

This bird frequents places remote from the habitations of man: so is a sign of desolate desert regions.

b *Mangles,* while at Petra, describes the screaming of the eagles, hawks, and owls, seemingly annoyed at any one approaching their lonely habitation.

c *Mat. Arnold.*

"It should be laid waste with as much care and exactness as men usually apply in building."—*Spk. Com.*

d Is. xiii. 22.

a "The wild cats shall meet the jackals."—*Henderson.*

b "Lilith, corresponding to the *Lamia* of Greek and Roman demonology, a she-demon haunting waste places, and supposed to be especially fatal to

seems that the animal really intended was a large ape or monkey, to which the name "satyr" is often applied in classical authors, and modern research has shown us that the larger monkeys extended their range much further north and east from Africa than they do now; that several species, especially the Mockos, exist to this day in Arabia, and might th refore very probably, after the destruction of Babylon, roam unmolested, and haunt the ruins of the desolate city.[d]

16, 17. (16) book . . Lord, *i.e.* the book of Isaiah's own prophecy, in which the fate of Edom is declared. Or more generally the book of Scripture, which contains many threatenings such as these, which have been fulfilled.[a] of these, *i.e.* of these creatures of the wilderness and desolation. (17) cast the lot, *i.e.* arranged their lot; appointed Edom for these wild beasts. With evident allusion to God's dividing the land of Canaan among His people by lot.[b]

The Bible on tenter-hooks.—In a Yorkshire village I knew one Thomas Walsh. It was a favourite opinion of Walsh's that the Bible was "all made up." He could never believe it was written where it professed to be, and by the men said to have written it. Walsh owned a considerable part of a factory, and one year he set his heart on making a very large and fine piece of cloth. He took great pains with the carding, spinning, dyeing, weaving, and finishing of it. In the process of manufacture it was one day stretched out on the tenter-hooks to dry. It made a fine show, and he felt very proud of it. The next morning he arose early to work at it, when, to his amazement, it was gone! It had been stolen during the night. After weeks of anxiety and expense, a piece of cloth, answering the description, was stopped at Manchester, awaiting the owner and proof. Away to Manchester went Thomas, as fast as the express train would carry him. There he found many rolls of cloth which had been stolen. They were very much alike. He selected one which he claimed as his. But how could he prove it? In doubt and perplexity he called on his neighbour Stetson. "Friend Stetson, I have found a piece of cloth which I am sure is the one which was stolen from me. But how to prove it is the question. Can you tell me how?" "You don't want it unless it is really yours?" "Certainly not." "And you want proof that is simple, plain, and such as will satisfy yourself and everybody?" "Precisely so." "Well, take Bible proof." "Bible proof! Pray what is that?" "Take your cloth to the tenter-hooks on which it was stretched, and if it is yours, every hook will just come to the hole through which it passed before being taken down. There will be scores of such hooks, and if the hooks and holes just come together right, no other proof that the cloth is yours will be wanted." "True. Why didn't I think of this before?" Away he hastened, and, sure enough, every hook came to its little hole, and the cloth was proved to be his, and the thief was convicted, all on the evidence of the tenter-hooks. Some days after this, Thomas again hailed his friend. "I say, Stetson, what did you mean by calling tenter-hooks proof, the other day, 'Bible proof?' I am sure, if I had the good evidence for the Bible that I had for my cloth, I would never doubt it again." "You have the same, only better, for the Bible." "How so?" "Put it on the tenter-hooks. Take the Bible and travel with it; go to the place where it was children." —*Mat. Arnold.*

c "The general sense evidently is that a human population should be succeeded by wild and lonely animals, who should not only live, but breed there, implying total and continued desolation."—*Alexander. d Sunday at Home.*

a Comp. De. xxviii. 58, xxix. 20, 27; 2 Ki. xxii. 13; Is. xxix. 11, 12, 18, xxx. 8.

b "He who originally allotted the land to the people (Nu. xxvi. 55; Jos. xix. 51) will now make it over by a formal act of transfer to these gloomy denizens." — *Spk. Com.*

"There are, to the S.E. of the Dead Sea, within three days' journey, upwards of eighty ruined towns absolutely desolated; several with large edifices. The Arabs sometimes use them as folds for their cattle; but in general they avoid them, on account of the enormous scorpions with which they swarm."—*Volney.*

r. 15. *T. Boston* i. 56; *Dr. R. Buchanan*, 95.

"A beautiful legend is that which relates that on a certain day, a St. Dunstan was reading the Scriptures in his cell, his harp, which hung on a peg against the wall, sounded, untouched by human hands; for an angel played on it the hymn

Gaudeate animi, to the great delight and solace of the holy man."—*Mrs. Jameson.*

"It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter:—it is all pure, all sincere; nothing too much, nothing wanting."—*Locke.*

[c] *Bible-Class Mag.*

made. There you find the Red Sea, the Jordan, the Lake of Galilee, Mounts Lebanon, Hermon, Carmel, Tabor, and Gerizim; there you find the cities of Damascus, Hebron, Tyre, Sidon, and Jerusalem. Every mountain, every river, every sheet of water mentioned in the Bible is there, just in the place where it is located. Sinai, and the Desert, and the Dead Sea are there; so that the best guide-book through the country is the Bible. It must have been written there on the spot, just as your cloth must have been made and stretched on your tenter-hooks. That land is the mould in which the Bible was cast, and when brought together, we see that they fit together. You might just as well doubt that your cloth was fitted to your hooks." "Well, well, I confess I never thought of that. I'll think it over again. If you are right, why, then I'm wrong, that's all."[c]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

[a] "In contrast to the ruin of Edom the Prophet now describes Israel's triumphant march home through the blossoming wilderness."—*Matthew Arnold.*

[b] Song Sol. ii. 1. "*Colchicum autumnale*, or meadow saffron."—*Gesenius.*

[c] Comp. Song Sol. iii. 9, iv. 8, 11, 15, vii. 5, ii. 1.

vv. 1, 2. *R. Southgate*, i. 301; *Dr. H. Draper*, iii. 538.

v. 2. *W. Jones*, i. 143.

[d] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Better teaching the solid rules of civil government, in their majestic unaffected style, than all the oratory of Greece and Rome. In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt, what makes a nation happy, and keeps it so;

1, 2. (1) **wilderness,** evidently that through which God's people travelled when returning from Babylon to their own land.[a] **rose,** probably the meadow saffron, an autumnal flower with bulbous roots.[b] (2) **glory,** *etc.*, *i.e.* what had lain barren and waste was now to equal the most beautiful and magnificent scenes of nature. **Lebanon,** famous for its trees. **Carmel,** famous for its flowers. **Sharon,** famous for its fertility.[c] **they shall see,** *i.e.* the returning people of God.

Glorious prospects of the Gospel Church (*vv.* 1, 2).—I. The state of persons and places unenlightened by the Gospel. 1. Such a place must be a dreary wilderness: 2. The same is true of souls. II. The state to which they are brought by the Gospel. 1. Beautiful description of the change: beauty of the rose; stability of the cedar; 2. Fruitfulness of the richest pastures; 3. Unutterable joy as the result of all. III. Particular view of the Gospel by which these effects are wrought. Simple exhibition of Christ crucified, and perfections of God united in the work of redemption. 1. To this it is ascribed in the Word of God: 2. To this it is traced in experience of all. Apply:—(1) Encouragement to ministers; (2) To the dejected on their own account.[d]

Village of Abbott's Ann.—The village of Abbott's Ann is about three miles distant from Andover, towards Salisbury. In the village is a small chapel, capable of accommodating about seventy persons, erected at the sole expense of Mr. Robert Tasker, the proprietor of the foundry which was so much injured by the mob in their senseless fury in 1830. In this place Sunday sports were kept up with great eagerness, and men and boys were seen playing at football on the Sabbath. The prosecution which, some years since, was entered upon, against some vile characters for beating and otherwise injuring the hearers at the chapel, was held in remembrance by the people, and operated as a protection from similar outrages; but a death-like apathy seized the population. The minds of the people were miserably dark. The small number of persons attending to hear the Word of Life had led the minister to determine that it was his duty to make an attempt in another village, in a different direction, which he had been obliged wholly to neglect; and the very evening on which he had stated his intention to the Christian friend

who built the chapel, and in the propriety of which he concurred, there was such a congregation as had not been in the place for eighteen months or more, and the improvement continued. This change the minister attributed to the circulation of religious tracts, in connection with preaching, regularly once a week. "I can now mention," says the minister, "a circumstance illustrative of the general and beneficial influence of the plans adopted, which I am sure will be grateful to your feelings, which is, that in the space of not many weeks, such has been the effect produced, that instead of curtailing my labours here, a gallery must soon be erected; and if the congregation continues to improve as it has done, one must be had. There is an evident movement among the dry bones in this benighted and depraved place. I mention these circumstances, because I conscientiously believe the distribution of tracts has mainly contributed to bring about this improvement in the state of things. Oh! may the Spirit be poured out, and then 'the desert will blossom abundantly as the rose, and become as the garden of the Lord.'"[e]

3, 4. (3) **strengthen ye,**[a] by encouraging assurances. The journey from Babylon to Jerusalem was a very long, difficult, and wearying one, especially trying to the weak and feeble ones of the company. **weak hands,** "that are relaxing their hold on God's promises."[b] (4) **fearful heart,** lit. *hasty*, whose heart palpitates through fear.[c] **vengeance,** upon His people's enemies. **recompence,** for their time of suffering at their enemies' hands. **he will come,** emphatically *He Himself.*

To the fearful-hearted (*v.* 4).—I. A counsel. Be strong—1. In the power of religious principle; 2. In the power of prayer; 3. In the power of Divine grace; 4. In the power of Christ. II. A caution. Fear not—1. On account of the greatness of your sins; 2. On account of your remaining corruptions; 3. On account of the dark dispensations of Providence.[d]

The believer's weakness.—A believer finds himself weak in knowledge; a simple child in the knowledge of God and Divine things. He is weak in love; the sacred flame does not rise with a perpetual fervour. He is weak in faith; he cannot suspend his all upon God's promises with cheerful confidence, nor build a firm fabric of hope upon the rock, Jesus Christ. He is weak in hope; his hope is dashed with rising billows of fears and jealousies. He is weak in repentance; troubled with that plague of plagues, a hard heart. He is weak in resisting temptations; he is weak in prayer, in filial boldness, in approaching the mercy-seat. He is weak in courage to encounter the king of terrors. He is weak in everything in which he should be strong. These weaknesses the believer feels, and bitterly laments; and this sense of weakness keeps him dependent on Divine strength, enabling him to say: "When I am weak, then am I strong."[e]

5, 6. (5) **eyes .. opened,** *comp.* Is. vi. 9, 10.[a] (6) **lame .. leap,** for literal fulfilment in Messianic times, see Ac. iii. 18, xiv. 10. **waters break out,** to the Eastern mind this bursting forth of a plentiful stream in an arid desert is one of the most beautiful and affecting images.[b] Comp. Is. xli. 18, xliii. 19, 20, xliv. 3, 4.

Streams in the desert (*vv.* 5—7).—The Gospel is here exhibited

what ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat: these only, with our law, best form a king."—*Milton.* Philetus, a disciple of Hermogenes, the conjurer, coming to dispute with St. James the elder, relied much upon his sophistry; but the Apostle preached Christ unto him with that powerfulness, that Philetus, returning back to his master, told him, "I went forth a conjurer, but am returned a Christian."
e R. T. S.

a Heb. xii. 12.

b "The image presented is that of persons who can scarcely lift up their hands, or stand upon their legs."—*Gill.*

c "Impatient of delay in the execution of God's promises."—*Clericus.*

v. 4. *T. Rogers,* i. 18.

d G. Brooks.

"Sorrow, that like an ocean, dark, deep, rough, and shoreless, roll'd its billows o'er the soul perpetually, and without hope of end."—*Pollok.*

e Pres. Davis.

a "So conspicuous and overpowering would be the interference of God on behalf of His people, that those of the most obtuse intellect

could not fail to perceive it."—*Henderson.*

Our Lord appeals to this prophecy. See Mat. xi. 4–6; Lu. vii. 22.

b See Ex. xvii. 6; Ps. lxxiv. 15, lxxviii. 15, 16.

vv. 5, 6. *J. Newton*, iv. 138; *T. Gallaudet*, 217.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d M. Sylvester.

to our view. We are led to contemplate—I. Its miraculous establishment. 1. A desert is but too just a picture of the world at large; 2. But by the Gospel a wonderful change is effected. II. Its characteristic benefits. 1. In all our faculties and powers we are fallen; 2. But in these respects, through the Gospel, we are renewed. Observe, then—(1) What little reason any person has to despond; (2) What glorious prospects are before us; (3) What ground for gratitude has every believing soul.[c]

The way to the better land.—No jars and discords shall spoil the melody of our spheres; our holiness shall need no crutch, but reach the fulness of a perfect stature. This vale of tears quit for rivers of eternal pleasures, our rights can never be invaded there; nothing can stain the comfo ts of that world; no blots nor wounds are there contracted or endured; no troubles in that Israel. There are no pauses of astonishment through surprisals of affliction; death smites no corners there; providence makes no storms; the glory of that place knows no eclipse nor cloud; there charity knows no breach; there are no wrinkles on the brow of God, nor frowns upon the face of Majesty.[d]

7, 8. (7) **parched ground,** *i.e.* the burning sand which produces the deceptive *mirage.*[a] **dragons,** jackals, or wolves, whose haunts are in dry places. **reeds and rushes,** the sure sign of moisture. (8) **highway,** *see* Is. xi. 16. A plain open path even through the desert regions. **way of holiness,** *i.e.* the way marked out by the Holy One, for the holy ones to walk over. **for those,** the returned captives:[b] the pilgrims to Zion. **wayfaring men,** those who travel along this road. **fools,** unable properly to guide themselves: these should have Divine guidance.

The King's highway (*v.* 8).—I. The path by which they go—"a highway." II. The pilgrim's passport—"a way of holiness." III. The protection they enjoy—"He shall be with them." IV. The immunity vouchsafed—"the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."[c] 1. Highway of salvation is a raised, or made way. Illustration from custom of levelling roads and taking out stones for a royal progress. Show how Christ in His work levelled the road to God. 2. Highway of salvation is a holy way. No unclean pass over it. Yet it is for sinners, but only penitent sinners. Show who out of Bible story have trodden it. 3. Highway of salvation is a simple way. The difficulties we put in the way. The idiot could apprehend it; he expressed it thus:—

> "I, a poor sinner, am nothing at all.
> And Jesus Christ is all in all."

A wicket-gate lies at head of the way, and by it we must enter.

The mirage, or serâb.—"The clouds in the north-west looked very dark, threatening rain. The shower, however, did not come immediately, but a cold wind from the same quarter kept blowing most of the day. About half-past twelve we saw some fine specimens of the mirage, or *serâb*, as the Arabs call it, at a short distance to the right. There were some striking though not very high hills in that direction, partly black and partly white, which, in conjunction with the mist which the noonday sun was now bringing up out of the moist ground, formed the whole scene. This mist took possession of a slight hollow, perhaps about two miles in length, and presented the most perfect resemblance to a

a "The *mirage* (Heb. *sharâb*, the sun's heat), shall become a (real) lake."—*Faussel.*

"The *mirage* (Fch.) is produced by the refraction of the rays of light, during the exhalation of vapours by the excessive heat of the sun, and frequently exhibits along with the undulating appearance of water, the shadows of objects within or around the plain, both in a natural and inverted position."—*Henderson.*

b "For the chosen people, who shall find the way so plain and easy, that the weakest can march in it without difficulty."—*Matthew Arnold.*

c Preacher's Portfolio.

In the early ages, inns and places of that kind were utterly unknown. private generosity had to furnish the rites of hospitality, and, as may be

lake shone upon by a cloudless sun. The mist crept a little way along the base of one of the black and white bluffs, and then there was a precipice projecting far into this sunny lake, the darker parts of the rock appearing exactly like trees springing out of the crevices of the cliff. The mist then sent up some grey masses, which spread themselves along the whole face of the hills for miles, with spaces here and there, some large, some small, which allowed the black patches on the hills to be seen. This produced the scene of a lofty wooded hill, projecting into the centre of the lake, which now seemed dotted with islands, and enlivened with ships moving across its placid waters, while at each end two huge cliffs frowned over it. It was fine, and continued in sight for more than half an hour, till, at a sudden turn, it was shut out by a sandy hillock. In some scientific works we have seen the *serâb* described at length, and accounted for on mathematical principles, the same as regulate the appearance of distant vessels upside down at sea. The two things are totally different, the latter being the reflection of a real, but far-off object, below the horizon; the other, wholly a deception, conjured up by the wondrous combination of mist and mountain. It is to this that the Prophet refers when, speaking of the renovation of the earth in the latter day, he says, 'and the parched ground (in the Hebrew it is *sherahv*) shall become a pool' (Isa. xxxv. 7),—that is, the *serâb* shall really become what it seems, a pool,—no longer mocking the weary traveller or thirsty Arab." *d*

9, 10. (9) **lion,** type of perils in the wilderness from savage animals. **walk,** or advance safely and securely along this way. (10) **ransomed,** Is. li. 11. **return,** to their own beloved city. *a*

The joy of the ransomed (*v.* 10).—I. The people here mentioned. "The ransomed of the Lord." II. What is said of them, "They shall return," etc. III. Their future portion, "They shall obtain joy," etc. IV. Remarks in application. *b*

"*Safe! safe! safe!*"—Figuratively, this passage refers to the absence of the oppressor and persecutor, and has often been illustrated in the success of missions to the heathen. A New England whale ship foundered in a gale, some years since, in the great Pacific. Her crew took to the boats, and, after toiling for several days and nights, two of the boats came in sight of an island. One of them was run through the surf, and the crew jumped on shore, making signs to the natives, to express their destitute condition. But no pity dwelt in those savage breasts. Rushing upon the exhausted seamen with their clubs, they instantly killed them, and made preparations to feast upon their bodies; for they were cannibals. Seeing the fate of their companions, the other boat's crew pulled hastily away from that dreadful spot; and, after almost incredible suffering, were picked up by a friendly vessel, and saved. Some years passed away, and another ship was wrecked in the same seas, and near that island. Her commander had been second mate of the former ship, and was saved with the boat's crew which witnessed the destruction of their shipmates by the cannibals. Again he approached the island, a wrecked mariner, and reduced by hunger and exhaustion to a feeble and emaciated state. He recognised the fatal shore, and told his companions of the cannibals who dwelt beyond it. But they were too weak to put out to sea again. To do so was to die. They could but die if they landed, and perhaps the

supposed, such generosity has always been in high repute. Isa. xxxv. 8, may be illustrated from modern travels. "As it would be next to an impossibility," says Irwin, "to find the way over these stony flats, where the heavy foot of a camel leaves no impression, the different bands of robbers [wild Arabs] have heaped up stones at unequal distances for their direction thro' this desert. We have derived great assistance from the robbers in this respect, who are our guides when the marks either fail or are unintelligible to us."

d Dr. Bonar.

a "There is something inexpressibly touching in this conclusion of the long roll of prophecy, which the holy Prophet had so faithfully and so patiently unfolded."—*Spk. Com.*

b R. L. Armstrong. "The highway before described not only leads to Zion, the Church below, but to the Zion above, to the heavenly glory; and all the redeemed, all that walk in this way, shall come thither; at death their souls return to God that gave them, and in the resurrection their bodies shall return from their dusty beds, and appear before God in Zion."—*Gill.*

vv. 8—10. *C. Bradley,* ii. 125; *J. Summerfield,* 434.

v. 10. *J. Williams,*

271; *Dr. A. Rees*, iv. 422; *Dr. H. Draper*, iii. 588; *C. Bradley*, ii. 143; *D. Patterson*, 259; *T. E. Hankinson*, 141; *R. Gordon*, iii. 184. Dr. Jas. Spener, some days before his death, gave orders that nothing of black should be on his coffin—"For," said he, "I have been a sorrowful man these many years, lamenting the deplorable state of Christ's Church militant upon earth; but now being upon the point of retiring into the Church triumphant in heaven, I will not have the least mark of sorrow left upon me; but my body shall be wrapped up all over in white, for a testimony that I die in expectation of a better and more glorious state of Christ's Church to come, even upon earth."

savages might be merciful. They landed, therefore, though in great fear. Perceiving none of the natives, they hauled their boat up on the beach, and sought the shelter of the adjacent woods, in the hope of finding fruits or berries for subsistence. But once in the woods, their fears increased. They moved stealthily along, alarmed at the crackling of the dry branches beneath their feet, and at every unusual rustling of the leaves. Death seemed to speak in every sound, and to leer upon them through every opening glade of the forest. Cold sweats gathered on their sunbrowned brows, and more than once they halted, and consulted on the propriety of returning to their boat. But as often they resolved to advance, especially as they found themselves ascending a wooded hill, which they hoped might furnish them with a nook or cave in which to hide. Thus, trembling, they proceeded. They approached its summit, which was bold and rocky. The foremost of the party ventured from the shelter of the trees to view the island. Cautiously he stole, step by step, to the mountain's brow, until his eye caught sight of the village below. Then he literally sprang into the air, clapped his hands, and shouted, "Safe! safe! safe!" "What is the matter?" asked his companions, who thought him crazy. "We are safe, I tell you! We are safe," he replied, pointing to the village on the plain below. Looking down, the now joyful seamen beheld a church, lifting its modest front above the huts of the natives. Then they shared in the transports of their companion. They leaped, they wept, they embraced. They knew by that church the missionary was there. They knew that where he lived cannibalism must be dead. They accordingly descended to the plain, and found, instead of a cruel death, a hearty, generous hospitality.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH.

1—3. (1) **came to pass**, *comp.* with the narratives in the historical books, 2 Ki. xviii. 13—20. xix; 2 Chr. xxxii. **fourteenth year**, B.C. 713. **Sennacherib**, this name on the Assyrian inscriptions can be recognised only with some uncertainty. Sennac. was viceroy for Sargon, his father, who was king at the time.[a] **defenced cities**, outlying forts, intended to check an invader. (2) **Rabshakeh**, the chief envoy. For the other officers see 2 Ki. xviii. 17. **Lachish**, a frontier town S.W. of Jerusalem.[b] **conduit**, *etc.*, see Is. vii. 2. (3) **scribe**, or secretary. **recorder**, or royal historian.

Self-slaves.—There have been men who could discipline and control armed legions in the most perilous encounters, but who never learnt the art of self-control. They knew nothing of fear in the most deadly strifes, when the slain around them were numbered by thousands, but they have cowardly shrunk from the contest with self. They have manfully fought for the liberties and honour of their country, but they have been the meanest slaves in the inner world of the heart. Hosts of vile passions, like ghastly spectres, peopled their souls, and they have never dared to look them in the face, or to take one of them as a prisoner of war. Instead of dragging them to the altar and slaying them like deadly foes before the Lord, they have succumbed

a Herodotus informs us that the expedition was made against Sethos, king of Egypt, and rebellious Judah, which had refused its tribute, was to be dealt with on the way.

b Jos. x. 3; 2 Chr. xi. 9; Jer. xxxiv. 7.

"When God seeth a hypocrite, He will pull his vizard from his face, as Adam was stripped of his fig leaves, and show the anatomy of his heart, as though his life were written on his forehead."—*Henry Smith.*

to them; nay, more, treacherous to their highest and best interests, they have cherished and fostered them. Bold as they may have been elsewhere, they proved themselves too craven-hearted to assault these internal enemies, or to chase them away from the field of the heart. It is a lamentable fact, nevertheless a fact, that some of earth's greatest heroes have been the basest moral cowards. As the reward of their victories they have been adorned with robes of office, their breasts have been decked with stars, and made to flash with gems. And well they might, for beneath that glittering robe was a heart stained with foulest blots and infamous crimes. The gems in many cases were all outside. Not a single star of virtue studded the heart or beautified the soul. Within, like their own field of carnage, was full of dead men's bones, moral putrefaction and death.[c]

"A bond is necessary to complete our being, only we must be careful that the bond does not become bondage."—*Mrs. Jameson.*

"No good comes of doubting and brooding over one's sins."—*Dr. Payson.*

c R. Roberts.

4, 5. (4) **to Hezekiah,** obs. that "Rabshakeh nowhere calls him king." **what confidence,** the officer assumed that, confident of Egyptian help, Hezekiah had thrown off the Assyrian yoke by refusing the tribute. (5) **I say,** better rend., "I maintain (but it is mere talk) there is counsel and might for the war."[a] Rabshakeh would not understand Hezekiah's trust *in God.* **rebellest,** "Eight years after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, Hezekiah refused to pay his tribute any longer."[b]

a "Allusion is not to Hezekiah's prayers, but to his addresses to the people, as recorded 2 Chr xxxii. 6—8."—*Alexander.*

b Mat. Arnold.

The believer's trust (*v.* 5).—I. An important question. II. The Christian's answer. 1. In the Father, believing that He has chosen me, that He will protect me, teach, guide; 2. In His Son, my Brother, my Saviour, my Intercessor, my Advocate; 3. In the Holy Spirit, that He will drive all sin out, curb my temper, subdue my will, enlighten my understanding, comfort my despondency, help my weakness, etc. III. Application:—If we trust the triune God, we trust a power that is never exhausted, a love that never wanes, a kindness that never changes, a wisdom that is never nonplussed, a faithfulness that never fails.[c]

c C. H. Spurgeon.

The believer.—

All joy to the believer! He can speak—
Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek—
"Since the dear hour that brought me to Thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but Thine,
Nor hoped but in Thy righteousness divine:
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child;
Howe'er performed, it was their brightest part
That they proceeded from a grateful heart;
Cleansed in Thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil, and accept their good;
I cast them at Thy feet,—my only plea
Is what it was—dependence upon Thee,
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never failed, nor shall it fail me now."
Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
Humility is crowned, and Faith receives the prize.[d]

"In all these (the Articles of Faith comprised in the Creed), the sky of my belief is serene, unclouded by doubt. Would to God that my faith, that faith which works on the whole man, confirming and conforming, were but in just proportion to my belief, to the full acquiescence of my intellect, and the deep consent of my conscience! The very difficulties argue the truth of the whole scheme and system for my understanding, since I see plainly that so must the truth appear, if it be the truth."—*Coleridge.*

d Cowper.

6, 7. (6) **staff . . reed,** Eze. xxix. 6, 7. The reed, or cane, of the Nile was the symbol of the country. Sargon had already

a "Rabshakeh speaks here as if he had been in-

structed by some of the apostate Israelites, who pretended to worship 'the Lord' under the forms of heathen worship. To them Hezekiah was an irreverent iconoclast, a narrow-minded bigot."—*Spt. Com.*

"Known mischiefs have their cure, but doubts have none; and better is despair than fruitless hope mix'd with a killing fear."—*May.*

b H. W. Beecher.

a "Hezekiah might have furnished 2,000 men for Rabshakeh's army, but not 2,000 trained for cavalry, as the training of cavalry was forbidden by Mosaic law."—*Henderson.*

b Or he may have heard of Isaiah's denunciations, and regarded himself as commissioned to execute them.

"Infidelity is the joint offspring of an irreligious temper and unholy speculation, employed, not in examining the evidences of Christianity, but in detecting the vices and imperfections of professing Christians."—*Robert Hall.*

a Roberts.

inflicted a heavy blow on Egypt. **so is Pharaoh,** *comp.* the experience of Samaria, Is. xxx. 3. (7) **Lord our God,** Rabshakeh had a very confused notion of the religion of the Jews, and fancied that Hezekiah had offended the national God, and so even His protection had been removed from him.[a]

Modern scepticism.—I put you on your guard against the scepticism of our time. And do you think that I am about to enlarge upon the scepticism of Rousseau, of Diderot, of Voltaire, of Bolingbroke, of Hobbes, and of Hume?—that was swept away with their ashes, and is buried. The great scepticisms of our time are market scepticism, political scepticism, and religious scepticism. Men who feel that it would be wicked to sacrifice great pecuniary interests for the sake of principle; men who think it would be a tempting of Providence to refuse profitable business speculations, to leave profitable situations, or to refuse dividends of evil; men whose consciences will not permit them, as the members of a corporation, to expose its wickedness; men who stand in the market, and feel that they have a right to do anything that wins,—these men are infidels. You need not tell me that they believe in the Bible: they believe in an empty Bible,—a Bible of the letter, and not a Bible of the spirit, which says to a man, "Sacrifice your right hand before you do your integrity."[b]

8—10. (8) **pledges,** hostages, as security that payment of tribute shall be resumed. The hostages were to be two thousand soldiers fit for cavalry. Evidently Rabshakeh intended to taunt Hezekiah concerning his military inefficiency. The Jews were specially weak in cavalry, and in this branch the Assyrian army was strong.[a] (9) **one captain,** with his one cavalry regiment. (10) **the Lord said,** *i.e.* the supreme ruler of the gods, not Jehovah, though confounded with Him. Some false prophet may have thus encouraged Rabshakeh.[b]

Giving hostages.—What an illustration have we here of the almost universal bad faith of the Oriental nations. Treaties of the most solemn and binding description are broken without any apparent compunction; and nothing can ensure their observance but that which takes hold of the natural feelings, the strong ties of blood and kindred. In the wars of Hyder Ali, Tippoo Saib, Runjet Sing, and in those of all the rajahs and chieftains of ancient and modern days, we seldom read or hear of the ratification of a treaty without hostages having been previously delivered to ensure its fulfilment. The sons of the vanquished monarch are generally taken as the pledges of his fidelity. This has been the practice, among the native rulers themselves, almost from time immemorial; and never more will the youthful princes behold their parents, or the beloved scenes of their infancy, unless the whole of the conditions shall have been duly performed. Their situation in the court of the conqueror is one of most complete restraint. They are environed with spies: and no communication can be received by them except through the regular authorities. They are continually tantalised with promises and reports: and their minds are kept in perpetual agitation, till death or liberty places them out of the reach of their enemies. On gala days they sometimes mix in the festivities; on which occasions the ignoble object is to expose them to the gaze of strangers, and thus to minister to the pride of the conquerors.[c]

11, 12. (11) Syrian language, the Aramaic, spoken in Mesopotamia and in the far East. Jews' language, the Hebrew. Such insulting speeches might well be veiled in a tongue the people could not understand. on the wall, to which the people evidently had crowded. (12) men . . wall, throughout Rabshakeh treats Hezekiah and his officers most contemptuously.[a]

Retraction of scepticism.—Laplace's great intellect could occupy itself during a lifetime with the sublimest truths of astronomy to no better purpose than to deny the existence of the Almighty Maker of the universe; impiously to insinuate that the supposed useful purposes of our system could have been accomplished otherwise, and better, than at present; and, finally, to discard religion, and the sanctions which it derives from a future existence and its conditions, as a cruel imposture practised upon the ignorant credulity of mankind. It is right, however, to state that M. Laplace, not long before his death, intimated to a distinguished English philosopher (Professor Sedgwick) a great change of opinion. Having spoken to him earnestly on the religious character of our endowments and course of academical study, M. Laplace added: "I think this right; and on this point I deprecate any great organic changes in your system: for I have lived long enough to know—what at one time I did not believe—that no society can be upheld in happiness and honour without the sentiments of religion." This remarkable statement is made on the authority of Professor Sedgwick himself, who says it is in the very words of Laplace, "as nearly as I can translate them."[b]

13–17. (13) cried, with evident intention of annoying the officers. (14) deceive you, by his assurances and promises. (15) trust in the Lord, he not only insults Hezekiah, but flings his insults directly at Jehovah, whose name and power were soon after vindicated in the awful destruction of Sennacherib's host. (16) make . . present, or seek my favour with a present. come out to me, as an indication that you give up trust in Hezekiah, and put your trust in me. eat, *etc.*, figures for perfect national security. (17) until I come, back from successful war with Egypt. take you away, it was regarded as politically necessary to the schemes of Assyria to remove the kingdom of Judah, which might seriously interfere with the conquest and holding of Egypt. Rabshakeh smoothes this over with fair promises.

Utility of opposition.—A certain amount of opposition is a great help to a man. Kites rise against, and not with the wind. Even a head-wind is better than none. No man ever worked his passage anywhere in a dead calm. Let no man wax pale, therefore, because of opposition. Opposition is what he wants, and must have, to be good for anything. Hardship is the native soil of manhood and self-reliance. He that cannot abide the storm without flinching or quailing, strips himself in the sunshine, and lies down by the wayside to be overlooked and forgotten. He who but braces himself to the struggle when the winds blow, gives up when they have done, and falls asleep in the stillness that follows.[c]

18–21. (18) any . . delivered, Rabshakeh has the name of the Jews' God, but he classes Him with the gods of other nations,

[a] "Isaiah, as a faithful historian, records the filthy and blasphemous language of the Assyrian, to mark aright the true character of the attack on Jerusalem."—*Fausset.*
"Concave mirrors magnify the features nearest to them into undue and monstrous proportions; and in common mirrors that are ill cast, and of uneven surface, the most beautiful face is distorted into deformity. So there are many minds of this description, they distort and magnify, diminish or discolour, almost every Gospel truth which they reflect."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

[b] *Sam. Warren.*
Hume once observed, that all the devout persons he had ever met with were melancholy. On this Bishop Horne remarked, "This might very probably be true; for, in the first place, it was most likely that he saw very few, his friends and acquaintance being of another sort; and, secondly, the sight of him would make a devout man melancholy at any time."

"When you doubt, abstain."—*Zoroaster.*

[c] *J. Neal.*

[a] 2 Ki. xvii. 24.

and has, by a bitter experience, to learn that Jehovah is God alone. (19) Hamath . . Arphad, Is. x. 9. Sepharvaim,[a] now Sipphara, on the E. of Euphrates, above Babylon. (20) that the Lord should, this is a direct challenge to Jehovah to show Himself other than the gods of the nations. (21) held their peace,[b] silence was the most humiliating answer. It always is to rude and insulting people. Hezekiah could afford to wait for God's time, when He would be pleased to vindicate Himself, and show His mighty power.

Causes of infidelity.—1. A drowsy inobservance and carelessness which do not mind the concerns of the soul, or regard the means of God for its conversion. 2. Sloth, which indisposeth men to undergo the fatigue of seriously attending to the doctrine propounded, of examining its grounds, of weighing the reasons inducing to belief. 3. Stupidity, or dulness of apprehension in understanding the Christian doctrine. 4. A bad judgment, corrupted with prejudicate notions, and partial inclinations to falsehood. 5. Perverseness of will, which hindereth men from entertaining notions disagreeable to their fond or froward humour. 6. Hardness of heart, which is so often represented as an obstruction of belief. 7. A want of love to the truth. 8. A grand cause of infidelity is pride, which doth interpose various bars to the admission of Christian truth. 9. Pusillanimity, or want of good resolution and courage: cowards and infidels are well joined among those who are devoted to the fiery lake. 10. Sturdiness, fierceness, wildness, untamed animosity of spirit; so that a man will not endure to have his will crossed, to be under any law, to be curbed from anything which he is prone to affect. 11. In fine, from what spirit infidelity doth proceed, we may see by the principles commonly with it espoused, for its support and countenance, by its great masters and patrons.[c]

22. clothes rent, as a sign of their distress at the blasphemies to wh. they had been compelled to listen.[a] See Is. xxxiii. 7, xxxvii. 1; Matt. xxvi. 65.

Unavailing fear.—He that trembles at the very sight of his burden, with what courage will he be able to stand under it? Can the trembling of the lamb keep off or mitigate the rage of the wolf? He that continually torments himself with the fear of an approaching evil, does anticipate his misery, not avoid it. Every strong apprehension of an object is a certain approximation of it to the soul. Fear makes the evil that is feared present to a man, in respect of its trouble, before it can be present in its existence: wherefore it is so far from keeping off a calamity, that it brings it before its time. It was not Hezekiah's fear of Sennacherib, but his confidence in God that did protect him.[b]—*Effects of fear.*—William Kay, a Flemish painter, gained such reputation for portrait painting that the Duke of Alva sat to him: but while he worked on the picture, the Judge Criminal and other officers waited on the duke to know his determinate orders in regard to the Counts Egmont and Hoorn. The duke, with a terrible austerity of countenance, ordered their immediate execution. Kay was so violently affected by the piercing look and peremptory command of Alva, that he went home, fell sick, and died through the terror impressed on his mind by this transaction.[c]

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b Ex. xiv. 14.

Proteus was a fabled sea-god of such wonderful power that he could change his form at will. He would become a wild boar, a fierce tiger, a roaring lion, a scaly dragon, a burning fire, or a raging flood. He was overcome by putting a chain on his limbs, and holding it firmly while he transformed himself, until he returned at length to his original shape.

"To doubt is worse than to have lost: and to despair, is but to antedate those miseries that must fall on us." —*Massinger.*

c Dr. Barrow.

a "The rending of the garments was a common and very expressive token of grief among the Hebrews and other Eastern nations." — *Henderson.*

Van Lennep says that nowadays this tearing of garments is quite a sham. They only split a seam down a little way, so that it can easily be mended.

b Dr. South.

"A bitter and perplexed 'What shall I do?' is worse to man than worse necessity."—*Coleridge.*

c Percy Anec.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.

1, 2. (1) **sackcloth**, rough hair garment: a further sign of humiliation and grief. **house of the Lord**, the Temple where the Divine symbol rested. There he would most fully realise the Divine presence. See in this a fulfilment of Sol.'s prayer.[a] (2) **unto Isaiah**, as the recognised Divine Prophet, from whom the Divine will might be known.

Believing is trusting.—There is a boy whose father was buried yesterday. To-day he is wearing his father's gold watch. Some wicked lads are trying to take it from him. He is struggling to keep it: but they are too strong for him. He is just about to lose it, when I come up, and say, "Give it to me, my boy, and I'll keep it safe for you." For a moment he looks at me with doubtful eye; but as I say to him, "Trust me!" and he sees that I am earnest and sincere, he hands it over to me, and I prevent him from being robbed. That is just what the Apostle Paul says of himself. He had, as you have, something far more precious than a gold watch—an immortal soul; and he was afraid of losing it: he could not keep it himself. Jesus said, "Give it to Me," and he gave it to Him; and then you hear him say rejoicingly, "I know whom I have believed" (which is the same thing as whom I have trusted), "and am persuaded that He will keep that which I have committed to Him against that day." You, my dear friends, have souls too, and they are in danger of being lost; there is only one way of getting them saved—giving them into the keeping of Jesus, "trusting" Him with them. What warrant have you for trusting Him? Just what Paul had,—His own word; and that is always enough.[b]

3—5. (3) **rebuke**, or reproof, for the Assyrian policy of Ahaz, the bitterness of which the people were now made to feel. **blasphemy**, contempt, or provocation. **children . . forth**,[a] a poetical figure for disappointed expectations. When Hezekiah threw off the Assyrian yoke, the people looked for perfect security from evil consequences, and such, indeed, was Hezekiah's expectation. But now they were humiliated and in extreme peril. (4) **lift up thy prayer**, act, that is, as national intercessor. **remnant**, *i.e.* the two tribes composing the kingdom of Judah.

Controlling faith.—Conscience is so modified by a man's faith, that it will sanction an act in one man which it will condemn in another. A Roman Catholic believes that he ought to pray to the Virgin Mary to intercede for him with God; and, if a good Roman Catholic were to neglect his worship to the saints, his conscience would smite him, until he would confess his sin with tears. Now, if a good Protestant were to pray to saints, or to any other being but God, his conscience would smite him for doing that which the conscience of the Roman Catholic smote him for not doing. So the heathen mother will conscientiously throw her infant into the Ganges, or under the wheels of Juggernaut, while the conscience of a Christian mother would convict her of murder, were she to do the same act. Conscience seldom convicts those that Christians call impenitent persons for neglecting to pray; while, the moment a man becomes a true

a 1 Ki. viii. 29.

Ps. lxxiii. 16, 17, lxxvii. 13.

"Of the king's prompt appeal to God in his extremity, Gill quaintly says, Hezekiah does not sit down to consider Rabshakeh's speech, to take it in pieces, and give an answer to it, but he applies unto God."—*Alexander.*

v. 1. *R. Warner*, i. 76; *J. H. Pott*, ii. 282.

b J. H. Wilson.

a Is. xxvi. 18.

v. 3. *Bp. Andrewes*, iv. 341; *Dr. T. Coney*, iii. 1.

v. 4. *Dr. T. Coney*, ii. 389; *R. Beddome*, iv. 11.

"But be not long; for in the tedious minutes—exquisite interval—I'm on the rack; for sure the greatest evil man can know bears no proportion to this dread suspense."—*Froude.*

b J. B. Walker.

"Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt."—*Shakespeare.*

believer, he will be convicted of guilt if he neglects the duty. So certainly and so clearly is it true, that a man's conscience is governed by his faith.[b]

6, 7. (6) not afraid, there was no reason for fear if God took up the case, and vindicated His insulted majesty. blasphemed me, obs. that the *Me* is emphatic. (7) blast, some think prophetic of the simoon that destroyed the Assyrian army. Others think it means, I will put a spirit of courage and resolution into him, so that he shall prosecute his undertaking to his final and utter ruin. rumour, prob. of that portion of his army that was proceeding to attack Jerusalem.[a]

Retribution.—In the year 1731, as an African youth, called Job Ben Solomon, son of the high priest of Bundo in Forta, was travelling on the south side of the Gambia, he was robbed, seized, and sold as a slave to an American captain, who carried him to Maryland. Job, on his arrival in Maryland, was sold to a planter, who finding him a youth of very distinguished abilities, treated him with great respect, and at the expiration of twelve months undertook to forward a letter of Job's own writing, in the Arabic tongue, to Mr. Oglethorpe in England, whose fame as a friend of humanity pointed him out as the likeliest person to effect the restoration of an unfortunate captive to his native country. Mr. Oglethorpe, on receiving the letter, immediately sent out instructions for the ransom of Job, and his conveyance to England. Job soon after arrived in this country, and was introduced to court, where he was generously received by the royal family, and most of the principal nobility, who honoured him with many marks of their favour. After he had continued in England about fourteen months, Job resolved to return to his native land, from an earnest desire which he had to see the high priest, his father. On his leaving England he was loaded with presents from the royal family, the nobility, and the African Company: the latter of whom ordered their agents on the African coast to show him the greatest attention. Job arrived at James Fort on the 8th of August, 1734, at which time Mr. Moore, then in the service of the African Company, was at that place. A relation of what followed after the first interview between Mr. Moore and Job has been published by the former, and from it we extract the following very interesting account. "Job having a mind to go up to Joar to talk to some of his countrymen, went along with me. We arrived at the creek of Damofeusa; and having some old acquaintances at the town of that name, Job and I went there together. In the evening as we were sitting under a great tree, there came six or seven of the very people who three years before had robbed Job, and sold him unto slavery. Job affecting not to know them, asked them some questions about himself, which they answered according to the truth. At last he inquired how the king, their master, did. They answered that he was dead. 'Dead!' exclaimed Job, 'how did he die?' 'Among the goods,' replied they, 'for which he sold poor Job to the American captain, there was a pistol, which the king used commonly to wear suspended by a sling about his neck; and the pistol being loaded, one day accidentally went off, and the balls lodging in his throat, he presently died.' Job was so transported at the close of this story, that he immediately fell on his knees and returned thanks to Mahomet, for making his

[a] First, of the advance of Tirhakah; then, of the destruction of his own army.

From this it would appear that Sennacherib was not present in person when the catastrophe took place outside Jerusalem. About this there is evident uncertainty.

[b] "Some are in the habit of shouting, 'No surrender;' but I say we should all surrender; we should surrender our passions, and our prejudices, and our uncharitableness towards others. We should seek to win as much as we can from the common humanity of our adversaries. The good and the wise will pursue this course, and they will succeed; whilst the treacherous, the arrogant, and the intolerant will dwindle far behind in the march, and will perish of self-contention, instead of coming up to win the laurels." — *Bamford.*

From the register of Alnwick, Bishop of Norwich, it appears that a Testament of Wickliff's version, in the year 1429, cost four marks and forty pence (£2 16s. 8d.) equal to more than twenty pounds of our present money; a large sum in those days, when five pounds was considered sufficient

persecutor die by the very goods for which he sold him unto slavery. Job then turning to Mr. Moore, said, 'You see now, Mr. Moore, that God Almighty was displeased at this man's making me a slave, and therefore made him die by the very pistol for which he sold me. Yet ought I to forgive him; because had I not been sold, I should neither have known anything of the English tongue, nor have had any of the fine useful and valuable things I have brought with me; nor have known that there is such a place in the world as noble England; nor such good and generous people as Mr. Oglethorpe, Queen Caroline, the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Montague, the Earl of Pembroke, Mr. Holden, and the Royal African Company.'" [b]

for the annual maintenance of a respectable tradesman, or a yeoman, or one of the inferior clergy.

[b] *Percy Anec.*

8—10. (8) **Libnah**, ten miles north of Lachish, and nearer to Jerusalem. Whether he had taken Lachish does not appear. (9) **Ethiopia**, *see* Is. xviii. for an account of Tirhakah.[a] **sent messengers**, &c. he could not execute immediate vengeance on Hezekiah, as he required all his army to meet Tirhakah. So he gave Hezekiah a respite, but severely threatened him. (10) **God . . deceive**, or delude thee with **promises**. Jehovah's promises are ever safe to trust to.[b]

[a] "Tirhakah was one of the most famous conquerors of ancient times. He was at this time either in close alliance with Egypt, or more prob. in actual possession of Thebais, or Upper Egypt."—*Alexander.*

[b] Comp. Is. xxxvi. 18—21.

Effects of infidelity on character and conduct.—A motive in which the reason of man shall acquiesce, enforcing the practice of virtue at all times and seasons, enters into the very essence of moral obligation. Modern infidelity supplies no such motive: it is, therefore, essentially and infallibly a system of enervation, turpitude, and vice. This chasm in the construction of morals can only be supplied by the firm belief of a rewarding and avenging Deity, who binds duty and happiness, though they may seem distant, in an indissoluble chain; without which, whatever usurps the name of virtue is not a principle, but a feeling—not a determinate rule, but a fluctuating expedient, varying with the tastes of individuals, and changing with the scenes of life. The actions of men are oftener determined by their character than their interest: their conduct takes its colour more from their acquired tastes, inclinations, and habits, than from a deliberate regard to their greatest good. It is only on great occasions that the mind awakes to take an extended survey of her whole course, and that she suffers the dictates of reason to impress a new bias upon her movements. The actions of each day are, for the most part, links which follow each other in the chain of custom. Hence the great effort of practical wisdom is to imbue the mind with right tastes, affections, and habits, the elements of character, and masters of action. The exclusion of a Supreme Being, and of a superintending Providence, tend directly to the destruction of moral taste. It robs the universe of all finished and consummate excellence, even in idea. The admiration of perfect wisdom and goodness for which we are formed, and which kindles such unspeakable rapture in the soul, finding in the regions of scepticism nothing to which it corresponds, droops and languishes. In a world which presents a fair spectacle of order and beauty, of a vast family, nourished and supported by an Almighty Parent; in a world which leads the devout mind, step by step, to the contemplation of the first fair and the first good, the sceptic is encompassed with nothing but obscurity, meanness, and disorder.[c]

"It is a great assuming to say, 'I am a believer.' . . God forbid but there should be many — that many may hourly say so. But they that say so, say a great thing; and they had need weigh and consider what they say when they say this, 'I am a believer:' for in this same breath you say (or imply it, whether you say it or no), 'I am born of God, I am a heaven-born creature, I am of a Divine original. I am of God, because stamped with His image, and governed by the Holy Ghost.'"—*Howe.*

[c] *Robt. Hall.*

11–13. (11) **all lands,** the language of boastfulness.[a] **destroying them,** lit. *devoting* them: treating them as Divinely accursed. (12) **Gozan,** a district of Mesopotamia, on the river Chabour.[b] **Haran,** Ge. xi. 31. The Carræ of the Romans. **Rezeph,** about a day's journey W. of Euphrates. **Eden,** a region in Mesopotamia, in which, poss., the garden of Eden was situated. **Telassar,** now *Tel-afer*, W. of Mosul.[c] (13) **Hena, and Ivah,**[d] in Babylonia (see 2 Ki. xvii. 24).

Modern infidelity.—I understand that as the most dangerous, because the most attractive, form of modern infidelity which, pretending to exalt the beneficence of the Deity, degrades it into a reckless infinitude of mercy, and blind obliteration of the work of sin; and which does this chiefly by dwelling on the manifold appearances of God's kindness on the face of creation. Such kindness is, indeed, everywhere and always visible, but not alone. Wrath and threatening are invariably mingled with the love; and, in the utmost solitudes of nature, the existence of hell seems to me as legibly declared by a thousand spiritual utterances as of heaven. It is well for us to dwell with thankfulness on the unfolding of the flower, and the falling of the dew, and the sleep of the green fields in the sunshine: but the blasted trunk, the barren rock, the moaning of the bleak winds, the roar of the black, perilous whirlpools of the mountain's streams, the solemn solitudes of moors and seas, the continual fading of all beauty into darkness, and all strength into dust, have these no language for us? We may seek to escape their teachings by reasonings touching the good which is wrought out of all evil; but it is vain sophistry. The good succeeds to the evil as day succeeds the night; but so also does the evil to the good. Gerizim and Ebal, birth and death, light and darkness, heaven and hell, divide the existence of man and his futurity.[e]

14. the letter, containing the insults and threatenings given in the preceding verses. It seems to have been a proper official document from Sennacherib, but prob. was composed and written by Rabshakeh, as if so nearly resembles his speech. **went . . Lord,** *comp. v.* 1. **spread it,** it was written on a scroll which Hezekiah unfolded. A silent act of appeal to the Supreme Judge.[a]

Answers to prayer.—The Bible is full of stories that show us what great blessings have been received through prayer. Abraham's servant prayed when he was seeking a wife for his master Isaac, and he found the right one. Jacob prayed when he was wrestling with the angel, and he got a blessing from him. Moses prayed, and his prayer opened a way of escape for the Israelites right through the Red Sea. Hannah prayed, and Samuel was born. What a blessing that was. David prayed, and the blessing he received was victory over the giant. Elijah prayed, and his prayer shut up the windows of heaven, so that there was no rain for three years. He prayed again, and his prayer brought abundance of rain to refresh the parched earth. What a blessing that was! Isaiah and Hezekiah prayed, and an army of an hundred and eighty-five thousand men were killed in one night. Daniel prayed in the lions' den, and his prayer shut the mouths of the lions. Jonah prayed in the belly of the whale, and his prayer brought him up from the bottom of the sea, and set him down safely on the dry land again. Shadrach, Meshach, and

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a Is. xiv. 16.

b 2 Ki. xvii. 6, xviii. 11.

"The Gauzanitis of Ptolemy. To it a portion of the ten tribes were transferred by Shalmaneser. The modern *Kaushan*."—*Alexander.*

c Layard.

Tel means a hill in Arabic and Assyrian names.

d Musculus understands the dual form of Sepharvaim as denoting that it consisted of two towns, perhaps on different sides of the Euphrates, and that Hena and Ivah were the distinctive names of these towns." — *Alexander.*

e Ruskin.

a "God knows our necessities before we ask Him, but He delights in our unfolding them to Him with filial confidence."—*Fausset.*
Is. xxxiii. 22.
v. 14. *J. Marriott*, 424.
"The prayer that prevails most with God is not so much the labour of the lips, as the labour of the heart. And let a prayer be never so well composed for matter or method, and be dressed with never so much eloquence and variety of expressions, yet if the heart be not affected, if the sighs and groans of the heart be

Abednego prayed in the burning, fiery furnace, and their prayers kept them from being hurt by the fire. These are a few of the cases mentioned in the Bible which show us the blessings obtained by prayer.

15—17. (15) **prayed**,[a] adding words of faith and entreaty to his silent act. (16) **God of Israel**, *comp.* 2 Chr. xxx. 1, 5. **dwellest**, *etc.*, lit. *the inhabiter of the cherubs*, but, as Ex. xxv. 22, *between* the two cherubs.[b] **thou alone**, so that there is no comparison between Jehovah and the gods of the nations to whom Sennac. referred. **made . . earth**,[c] so absolutely all power must be in Thine hand. (17) **thine ear**, *etc.*, *see* 2 Chr. vii. 15, 16. Note the singular *ear* and plural *eyes*.[d]

Prayer works wonders.—Prayer is working wonders still. It brings down from heaven the very best things that are in it. It brings strength to the weak and riches to the poor, and comfort to those who are in sorrow. Prayer is a bank of wealth, a mine of mercies, a store of blessings. It flies where the eagle never flew. It travels further and faster than the light. Mary Queen of Scots used to say that she feared John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men. There is truth in every word of the hymn that says :—

> "Prayer makes the darkened clouds withdraw,
> Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw ;
> Gives exercise to faith and love,
> Brings every blessing from above."

Let me mention some instances to show the blessings obtained by prayer in these days. A Christian man had no money in his pocket, no food in the cupboard, and no credit at the store. He prayed to God for relief, and before he had done praying, a friend called and left him as much money as he needed. A Christian mother had a sailor boy thousands of miles away from her. She awoke one night, thinking about her absent boy. Something seemed to whisper to her—"Get up and pray for your son." She got up and prayed long and earnestly for him. Afterwards she found that he had been in great danger at that very hour. He had been washed overboard in a storm, and was caught by the hair of his head, and snatched from a watery grave, at the very time that his mother was praying for him.

18—20. (18) **of a truth**, or, it is true. Lord, even as he boasts,[a] **laid waste**, lit. *dried up*. (19) **no gods**, having no claim to the dignity, or share of the power, properly belonging to God : only idols.[b] (20) **know**, or gain a strong conviction ; be persuaded by the glorious deliverance Thou dost work for us. God's own honour is the strongest plea we can urge in our prayers.[c]

A prayer.—

> Thou, who dost dwell alone ;
> Thou, who dost know Thine own ;
> Thou, to whom all are known,
> From the cradle to the grave—
> Save, O save !
>
> From the world's temptations, from tribulations,
> From that fierce anguish wherein we languish,
> From that torpor deep wherein we lie asleep,
> Heavy as death, cold as the grave—
> Save, O save !

wanting, and faith within that makes the same effectual, they are not regarded at all with God."—*S. Smith* (1588).

a "A most appropriate and beautiful prayer, expressive of a clear faith and confident trust in Jehovah, as the only God, in opposition to the claims advanced by idolaters in behalf of their deities ; and recognising the Divine glory as the result of the supplicated deliverance."—*Henderson.*

b Ps. lxxx. 1, xcix. 1.

c Zwinglius calls this an *elegans prosopodosis*, showing that God had a right to all things, because He was their Maker.

d "When we would listen to any one we naturally incline *one* of our ears towards him, but when we would look at anything we open *both* our eyes."—*Gesenius.*

a "Faith does not seek to evade any seemingly adverse facts urged by infidelity. The Assyrian's induction as to the vanity of the 'religions of the world' was correct ; but it did not prove Hezekiah's affiance to be vain."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Whatever idolaters may theoretically hold as to the nature of their deities, they identify them practically with the stocks

and stones to wh. they pay their adorations."—*Alexander.*

c Ex. xxxii. 12—14; Ps. lxxxiii. 18; Da. ix. 18, 19.

"When poor men make requests to us, we usually answer them as the echo does the voice: the answer cuts off half the petition. We shall seldom find among men Jael's courtesy, giving milk to those that ask water, except it be, as this was, an entangling benefit, the better to introduce a mischief. There are not many Naamans among us, that, when you beg of them one talent, will force you to take two; but God's answer to our prayers is like a multiplying glass, which renders the request much greater in the answer than it was in the prayer."—*Bishop Reynolds.*
d Mat. Arnold.

a Comp. Is. xxx. 19.

b Henderson.

c C. H. Spurgeon.

d Ibid.

"Faith is the rock, while every good action is as a stone laid thereon. As the foundation without the walls is of slender value, so the building without a basis cannot stand; they are so inseparable that their conjunction makes them good."—*J. Beaumont.*

When the soul, growing clearer, sees God no nearer;
When the soul, mounting higher, to God comes no nigher,
But the arch fiend Pride mounts at her side.
Foiling her high emprise, scaling her eagle eyes;
And when she fain would soar, makes idols to adore,
Changing the pure emotion of her high devotion
To a skin-deep sense
Of her own eloquence;
Strong to deceive, strong to enslave—
Save, O save!
From the ingrained fashion
Of this earthly nature, that mars Thy creature;
From grief, that is but passion:
From mirth, that is but feigning; from tears that bring no healing;
From wild and weak complaining; Thine own strength revealing—
Save, O save!
From doubt, where all is double,
Where wise men are not strong,
Where comfort turns to trouble,
Where just men suffer wrong,
Where sorrow treads on joy, where sweet things soonest cloy,
Where faiths are built on dust, where love is half mistrust,
Hungry, and barren, and sharp as the sea—
O set us free!
O let the false dream fly, where our sick souls do lie
Tossing continually.
O where Thy voice doth come, let all our doubts be dumb;
Let all words be mild, all strife reconciled,
All pains beguiled.
Light brings no blindness, love no unkindness,
Knowledge no ruin, fear no undoing—
From the cradle to the grave,
Save, O save![d]

21, 22. (21) **sent,** *etc.*,[a] obs. that the answer of God in those days came through the prophet, not through the priest. (22) **virgin,** God's Church, regarded as not having defiled itself with idolatry. **daughter of Zion,** Is. i. 8. **at thee,** or *after thee,* as if she watched Sennac.'s humiliating retreat. "To shake the head was, among the Hebrews, an expression of contempt."[b]

The boldness of the citizen of Zion (*v.* 22).—Strong faith enables the servants of God to look with calm contempt upon their most haughty foes. I. We know that our enemies are attempting impossibilities. II. We know their weakness. III. Above all, we know that the Most High is with us.[c]

Prayer—its power against Satan.—There is a huge rock upon the Swiss side of the St. Gothard road, about which an old legend is told by the natives of the neighbouring village. The devil was whisking this enormous stone along very merrily at early dawn of day, when he was met by a devout old woman, who, being somewhat alarmed, uttered a prayer at the sight of the unexpected traveller. Such was the power of her prayer, that the demon dropped his burden at once, and there it lies, an indisputable proof that the devil is no match for old ladies who

know how to invoke the aid of heaven. Mother Church has sanctioned many a worse legend than this, for a truthful moral lies upon the surface. Let interceding believers make the fiend tremble always, by praying without ceasing. The weakest saint upon his knees is victorious over all the powers of hell.[d]

23—25. (23) **whom**, a solemn call to consider the glory and power of Jehovah. **Holy . . Israel**, the name for God frequently used by Isaiah, and almost characteristic of him. (24) **servants**, in allusion to Rabshakeh's boastings. **Lebanon**, by these figures he boasted that no obstacle had hitherto checked him.[a] **height . . border**, *i.e.* its extreme height, reaching the very summit. **forest . . Carmel**, better, its thickest forest. Carmel should not be a proper name, but translated *thick luxuriance*. (25) **digged**, getting water in waste desert places, where there seemed to be none. **dried . . places**, equally overcoming the difficulties of moats and rivers.[b]

Cedars of Lebanon.—At six o'clock we again set forward, and passing near the church, the priest, a venerable old man, with a flowing beard, was standing on the threshold, and courteously saluted us. Our road, somewhat better than yesterday, continued gradually to rise, and we were now fairly within that long elevated chain which has borne, from the earliest ages, the name of Lebanon. We had felt a great anxiety to see the celebrated cedars which are supposed to be the remains of the ancient forests that once entirely clothed these heights. Hitherto we had been allured forward by our guides with the promise of soon reaching them, but we now discovered that we had been purposely deceived, and ought to have taken another road, in which case the village of Eden, in their immediate vicinity, would have afforded us a more commodious halting-place. After leaving Balbec, and approaching Lebanon, towering walnut trees, either singly or in groups, and a rich carpet of verdure, the offspring of numerous streams, give to this charming district the air of an English park, majestically bounded with snow-tipped mountains. At Deir el Akmaar the ascent begins—winding among dwarf oaks, hawthorns, and a great variety of shrubs and flowers. After some hours of laborious toil, a loaded horse slipped near the edge of a precipice, and must inevitably have perished if a servant, with great presence of mind, had not cut the girths, and saved the animal, at the expense of most of the stores and the whole of the crockery. Vain were the lamentations over fragments of plates and glasses, broken bottles, and spilt brandy and wine, in an impoverished country, where nothing that contributes to comfort can be replaced. Seven hours were spent in attaining the summit of the mountain after leaving the village. The view on both sides was splendid. A deep bed of snow had now to be crossed, and the horses sunk or slipped at every moment. To ride was impracticable, and to walk dangerous, for the melting snow penetrated our boots, and our feet were nearly frozen. An hour and a half brought us to the cedars. Seven of the most ancient still remain. They are considered to be coeval with Solomon, and therefore held sacred. Rude altars have been erected near them, and an annual Christian festival is held, when worship is performed beneath their venerable branches. Other cedars, varying in age and size, form around them a protecting grove. We reckoned every tree with scrupulous care. Many,

a To get chariots to the tops of such mountains as Lebanon is a strong figure for mastering all obstacles and difficulties.

b "He boasts of having overcome all kinds of natural impediments. In arid regions he had digged and drunk water: in lands like Egypt, or Babylonia, he had dried up the streams of fortified places."—*Sp. Com.*

Is. xix. 6.

"That the **kings** of Assyria made havoc in the forests of Lebanon by hewing down the cedars and cypresses, appears from their own records, in extant Assyrian inscriptions."—*Wordsworth.*

"Below the trees unnumber'd rise, beautiful in various dyes; the gloomy pine, the poplar blue, the yellow beech, the sombre yew, the slender fir, that taper grows, the sturdy oak, with broad-spread boughs."—*Dyer.*

"There is no weariness like that which rises from doubting, from the perpetual jogging of unfixed reason. The torment of suspense is very great; and as soon as the wavering perplexed mind begins to determine, be the determination which way so

ever, it will find itself at ease."—*Dr. South.*

c Hogg.

a "Nothing could be more sublime in effect than the suddenness with which Jehovah here interrupts the boasting monarch."—*Henderson.*

Comp. Is. x. 5, 15.

b Ps. cxxix. 6–8.

c Others read, "and a field before the stalk comes," *i.e.* frail and tender, before the strong stalk has grown up.

"Not thus our infidels th' Eternal draw; a God all o'er consummate, absolute, full orbed, in His whole round of rays complete; they set at odds heaven's jarring attributes, and with one excellence another wound; maim heaven's perfection, break its equal beams, bid mercy triumph over God Himself, undeified by their opprobrious praise: a God all mercy is a God unjust."—*Young.*

d Francis.

a Ps. cxxxix. 2.

b De. xxviii. 6; 1 Ki. iii. 7; Ps. cx. 1, 8.

c "There are representations of prisoners led by a hook through the nose and lip in the bas-reliefs of Medeenet and Khorsabad, wh.

indeed, have sprung up from ancient roots, but enumerating all that present independent trunks, including the patriarchal trees, they amount to three hundred and forty-three. At a quarter of an hour from the cedars is the village of Beesharry, a lovely, romantic spot, on the brink of a deep glen.[c]

26, 27. (26) **I have done it,** *i.e.* in all thou hast done thou hast been but an instrument working out My purposes.[a] **ancient times,** *see* prophecy of De. xxviii. 49. **to lay waste,** as executor of Divine judgments. (27) **small power,** *lit.* short of hand, weak to resist. **as the grass,** soon cut down, and withered. **on the housetops,** with little rooting or moisture.[b] **corn blasted,** or blighted and turning black.[c]

God all in all.—It is a poor philosophy and a narrow religion which does not recognise God as all in all. Every moment of our lives, we breathe, stand, or move in the temple of the Most High; for the whole universe is that temple. Wherever we go, the testimony to His power, the impress of His hand, are there. Ask of the bright worlds around us, as they roll in the everlasting harmony of their circles, and they shall tell of Him whose power launched them on their courses. Ask of the mountains, that lift their heads among and above the clouds; and the bleak summit of one shall seem to call aloud to the snow-clad top of another, in proclaiming their testimony to the Agency which has laid their deep foundations. Ask of ocean's waters; and the roar of their boundless waves shall chant from shore to shore a hymn of ascription to that Being who hath said, "Hitherto shall ye come and no further." Ask of the rivers; and, as they roll onward to the sea, do they not bear along their ceaseless tribute to the ever-working Energy which struck open their fountains and poured them down through the valleys? Ask of every region of the earth, from the burning equator to the icy pole, from the rock-bound coast to the plain covered with its luxuriant vegetation; and will you not find on them all the record of the Creator's presence? Ask of the countless tribes of plants and animals; and shall they not testify to the action of the great Source of Life? Yes, from every portion, from every department of nature, comes the same voice: everywhere we hear Thy name, O God; everywhere we see Thy love. Creation, in all its length and breadth, in all its depth and height, is the manifestation of Thy Spirit, and without Thee the world were dark and dead. The universe is to us as the burning bush which the Hebrew leader saw: God is ever present in it, for it burns with His glory, and the ground on which we stand is always holy. How, then, can we speak of that Presence as peculiarly in the sanctuary, which is abroad through all space and time?[d]

28, 29. (28) **abode,** lit. *sitting.*[a] Assyria might think itself independent: it was, in fact, altogether in the hands of the God it despised and insulted. **going . . in,** De. vi. 7.[b] **rage,** as *v.* 4. (29) **tumult,** arrogance, insolence. **hook,** *etc.*, as a wild beast is led by a ring through the nose.[c] "The word used implies a hook or ring such as was used for securing large marine animals, and for curbing land animals, such as camels, buffaloes, etc.

Rings in the nose.—The cow, the tame buffalo, the bear, etc., in the East Indies, are frequently seen with rings in their noses, through which a cord is drawn, and the beast guided by it, as the

horse is guided by the bit of the bridle. The Hindoos compare a person who is the slave of another to a cow led by the ring in her nose. "It is usual in the East to fasten an iron ring in the nose of their camels and buffaloes, to which they tie a rope, by means of which they manage these beasts. God is here speaking of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, under the image of a furious refractory beast, and accordingly, in allusion to this circumstance, says, 'I will put My hook in thy nose.'" [d]

30—32. (30) **a sign,**[a] or assurance. The time of national distress, thro' the invasion of Sennacherib, would be limited to within two years, part of which had already passed. **groweth of itself,** without the ordinary processes of agriculture. **third . . sow,** &c. by that time the land would be freed of the enemy, and special Divine provision no longer needed. (31) **remnant,** *v.* 4.[b] **take root,** as a tree shaken and uprooted for a time. (32) **go forth,** to reoccupy. and till the ravaged lands. In times of siege country people take shelter within the fortified city. **zeal,**[c] or jealousy of the Divine honour.

The growth of plants.—The root fixes the plant in the soil, and trees strike their roots deeper and wider in exposed or stormy places than in sheltered situations. Virgil believed, or professed to have believed, in the notion that the roots of the oak penetrate as deeply into the ground as its branches ascend "high towards heaven;" and although this deep penetration of the roots is but a poetic fiction, the Mantuan bard was justified in observing that a tree with such roots as the oak might well defy the winds, and winter's rage. . . It is well known by arboriculturists that motion, as produced by wind, favours the formation of woody fibre, aiding, as it does, the descent of the elaborated sap from the leaves to the stem and roots; and that plantations that have long remained in a densely crowded state cannot be thinned without danger to the trees that are left standing, the heads of these being liable, in times of high wind, to overbalance, and so tear up the slender root limbs. To both safety and nourishment, as derived from the roots of plants, spiritualised allusion is made by Isaiah in the words of promise given above: "The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward." [d]

33—35. (33) **shall not,** *etc.*, by these figures Hezekiah is assured that the threatened siege of Jerusalem shall not even be attempted. **bank,** for the battering-rams, and other engines. (34) **return,** humiliated and discomfited:[a] back to Nineveh. (35) **defend,** or cover over as with a shield. **own sake,** Eze. xxxvi. 21, 22. **David's sake,** Ps. lxxxix. 28.

True and false conceptions of God.—If your God is made out of conceptions derived from the great and heartless round of the natural world; if you have a great crystalline God, such as philosophy deduces from the material globe, you can conceive of no such thing as His detracting from His dignity by coming down to barrow, as you call it, in this lower sphere. If you have a God whom mountains represent, or if you have a vast marble God, that sits as the central idol of the universe, it is to you contemptible to think of His bowing down and coming among men! But if you have a God fashioned from the elements revealed in the human soul, if you understand that greatness in

may, however, be symbolical."—*Spk. Com.*

Job xli. 1, 2; Eze. xix. 4. xxix. 4, xxxviii. 4.

rr. 28, 29. *Bp. O'Beirne*, i. 57.

d Burder.

a Is. vii. 14.

"There was to be an abundant supply of provisions during these two years of suffering, although the people were unable properly to till and sow their lands. God's thus sustaining them was the sign that He would presently deliver."—*Henderson.*

b 2 Ch. xxx. 6

Those of Judah who should survive Sennac.'s invasion.

c Is. ix. 7.

v. 31. *J. H. Newman*, 203; *W. Keeling*, iv. 383.

d Gorrie.

a "The scene of Sennac.'s overthrow is not mentioned. If, on leaving Libnah, he took a circuit to Beth-horon, hoping to surprise Jerusalem, it may have been actually at, or near, Nob."—*Spk. Com.*

"The Albigensian war, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, commenced with the storming of Beziers, and a massacre in which fifteen thousand per-

sons, or, according to some accounts, sixty thousand were put to the sword. Not a living soul escaped, as witnesses assure us. It was here that a Cistercian monk, who led on the crusaders, being asked how the Catholics were to be distinguished from heretics, answered, 'Kill them all! God will know His own.'"—*Percy.*
b H. W. Beecher.

the Divine Being does not mean muscular greatness, nor physical greatness, but purity, and depth, and scope of all the feelings of the heart, then the greater your God is, the more exquisite will be the things He will do in detail, the more possibility will there be of His descending and coming among men, and the more certainly will He be expected to be found among His family. As the mother is found where her child cries, and as the father is found where his son stumbles, so we should expect that, if God is a being whom we may know from the analogies of our own nature, He would be found living where men are tempted, and where they sin, and suffer, and die.[b]

36. angel,[a] *etc.*, 2 Ki. xix. 35. Whether the agency used were simoon or plague, does not appear from the narrative. The destroyer manifestly inflicted instant death.[b] they arose, *i.e.* the few who were spared.

The horrors of war.—

On Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat, at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast array'd,
Each horseman drew his battle-blade,
And furious every charger neigh'd
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven;
Then rush'd the steeds to battle driven;
And, louder than the bolts of heaven,
Far flash'd the red artillery.

But redder yet those fires shall glow
On Linden's hills of crimson'd snow,
And bloodier yet shall be the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

'Tis morn; but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war clouds rolling dun,
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun
Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye brave,
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few shall part where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding-sheet;
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.[c]

a "A distorted account of this catastrophe was given to Herodotus by the Egyptian priests, who represented the scene to have been Pelusium; Vulcan the deity whose aid was invoked; Sethos the monarch who invoked it; and field-mice the instruments by which the army of Sennac. were in one night rendered powerless, and obliged to take to flight on the following morning."—*Henderson.*
v. 36. *A. Calmet, v* 590.
b 2 K. xix. 35. "The brave, 'tis true, do never shun the light: just are their thoughts, and open are their tempers; freely without disguise they love or hate: still are they found in the fair face of day, and heaven and men are judges of their actions."—*Rowe.*
c Campbell.

37, 38. (37) departed, he prob. was not with his part of his army, but its destruction necessitated his giving up his expedition, and returning home. dwelt at Nineveh, remained quiet, not again attempting to attack Jerusalem. History intimates that he lived for sixteen years after this event.[a] (38)

a Died B.C. 696.—*Hitzig and Gesenius.*

Nisroch, from *Nisr*, eagle. and *och*, great.[b] The eagle was worshipped by the ancient Persians and Arabs. Armenia, or Ararat.[c] Esar-haddon, *see* Ezra iv. 2.

Barbarities of war—Spaniards in Mexico.—Several eminent writers have endeavoured to soften the character of Cortez, and have urged the necessity of war for the slaughters he committed. If any one, however, would trace the true character of Cortez and his countrymen, he must have recourse to the numerous Spanish writers who were either witnesses of the first wars, or soon after travelled in those countries. In these he will find many anecdotes not to be found in our modernised histories. It will be seen that Cortez set out to take gold by force, and not by establishing any system of commerce with the natives, the only just reason for effecting a settlement in a foreign country. He was asked by various States what commodities or drugs he wanted, and was promised an abundant supply. He and his Spaniards, he answered, had a disease at their hearts, which nothing but gold could cure; and he had received intelligence that Mexico abounded with it. Under the pretence of a friendly conference, he made Montezuma his prisoner, and ordered him to pay tribute to Charles V. Immense sums were paid, but the demand was boundless. Tumults ensued. Cortez displayed amazing generalship, and some millions of the natives were sacrificed to the disease of his heart. Pizarro, however, greatly exceeded Cortez in unmixed barbarity of soul. If we could forget that the avarice of Cortez was the cause of a most unjust and bloody war, in every other respect he would appear as one of the greatest of heroes. But Pizarro is a character completely detestable, destitute of every spark of generosity. He massacred the Peruvians, he said, because they were barbarians, and yet he himself could not read. Atabalipa, amazed at the art of reading, got a Spaniard to write the word Dios (the Spanish for God) on his finger. On trying whether the Spaniards agreed in what it signified, he discovered that Pizarro alone could not read. Pizarro, in revenge for the contempt he perceived in the face of Atabalipa, ordered that prince to be tried for his life for having concubines, and being an idolater. Atabalipa was condemned to be burned; but on submitting to baptism, he was only hanged.[d]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-EIGHTH.

1. **those days,** evidently the time of the Assyrian invasion. **sick unto death,** or with a sickness that imperilled his life.[a] It seems to have been a large boil or carbuncle.[b] It occurred in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign; *v.* 6 indicates that it was prior to Sennac.'s overthrow. **set . . order,** or give charge to thy house. Perhaps "make arrangement for the succession to thy throne." At the time Hezekiah had no son.

God's message to Hezekiah (*v.* 1).—The folly of man in minding the trifles of the moment, and neglecting the claims of eternity. The admonition implies—I. Set thy temporal affairs in order. II. Attend to thy spiritual concerns. III. Thou, especially, art warned. IV. Man's great wisdom is to know how to set his house in order. Apply:—(1) When God strikes, our only method is to turn to Him; (2) Our true remedy in all cases; (3) Be encouraged by the success of Hezekiah's prayer.[c]

P 2

b "The eagle-headed human figure in Assyrian sculptures is no doubt Nisroch, the same as Asshur, the chief Assyrian god. The corresponding goddess was Ashera, or Astarte." — *Fausset.*

c Ge. viii. 4.

"But war's a game which, were their subjects wise, kings would not play at. Nations would do well to extort their truncheons from the puny hands of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds are gratified with mischief; and who spoil, because men suffer it, their toy the world."—*Cowper.*

"He who makes war his profession cannot be otherwise than vicious. War makes thieves, and peace brings them to the gallows."—*Machiavelli.*

d *Percy.*

a 2 Ki. xx. 1; 2 Ch. xxxii. 24.
b See *v.* 21.
c *R. Cecil, M.A.* *v.* 1. *R. Bruce,* 163; *Dr. R. Lucas,* i. 145; *W. Reading,* iv. 348; *Dr. S. Chevriers.* i. 157; *G. J. Zollikoffer,* ii. 553; *G. Huggitt,* i. 293; *T. Wintle,* ii. 229; *Abp. Magee,* ii. 573; *Dr. T. Rennell,* 421; *D. Scott,* 397; *Bp. Malthy,* ii. 56; *Bp. Heber,* i. 92; *H. E. Manning,* iii. 311; *Bp. Colenso,* i.; *Abp. Secker,* iii. 265.

2, 3. (2) face . . wall, so as not to be disturbed by what was passing in the room.[a] prayed, *see* Is. xxx. 19. (3) in truth, or sincerity. perfect heart, or spirit of entire consecration.[b] wept sore, or with great weeping. His chief distress was occasioned by his having no son and successor.

Hannah More.—In 1782 she published *Sacred Dramas*, to which was appended a poem on "Sensibility." These have passed through a large number of editions. On the appearance of this little volume, Hannah More told her friend, Mrs. Boscawen, that she was greatly afraid that strangers would think her good; which led the latter to reply, "Read Matt. v. 16. I am not afraid they will think you good; I hope so. I am sure they will think you a hypocrite if you can so speak, and not out of an honest and good heart: but I have never suspected that any one could bring your sayings to confute your life." This book was highly praised by Bishop Lowth, and other men of mark. The general taste, however, at that time was so bad, that the word "sacred" was supposed to injure the sale. Some actually called the writer a mystic, because she made Hezekiah speak of his expectations of mercy resting on indulgence, not reward.

4—6. (4) then, in gracious response to prayer. (5) add, to the length of life as at first appointed for thee.[a] fifteen years, the Jewish tradition is that there were fifteen steps in the ascent to the Temple area.[b] Days make up the years of man's life, see Jacob's expression, Gen. xlvii. 9. (6) deliver, *etc.*, see prev. chapter.

Rev. James Hervey.—This excellent man, writing to a friend very shortly before his death, says, "Were I to enjoy Hezekiah's grant, and have fifteen years added to my life, I would be much more frequent in my applications to the throne of grace: we sustain a mighty loss by reading so much, and praying so little. Were I to renew my studies, I would take my leave of those accomplished triflers, the historians, the orators, the poets of antiquity: and devote my attention to the Scriptures of truth. I would sit with much greater assiduity at my Divine Master's feet, and desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This wisdom, whose fruits are everlasting salvation after death, I would explore through the spacious and delightful fields of the Old and New Testament."[c]

7, 8. (7) sign, Is. xxxvii. 30. "The token that God was willing to change on this occasion the ordinary working of natural law."[a] (8) sun dial, *etc.*, comp. the narrative in Kings.[b] Josephus thinks the degrees were steps ascending to the palace of Ahaz, the time of day being indicated by the number of steps reached by the shadow. Whatever the natural agency used, a miraculous intervention is plainly intended.

Believing without understanding.—"I will not believe anything but what I understand," said a young man in an hotel one day. "Nor will I," said another. "Neither will I," chimed a third. "Gentlemen," said one who was on a journey, and who sat close by, "do I understand you correctly, that you will not believe anything that you don't understand?" "I will not," said one; and so each one of the trio said. "Well," said the stranger, "in my ride this morning I saw some geese in a field

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a "The couches in the E. run along the walls of the houses. He turned away from the spectators to hide his emotion, and collect his thoughts for prayer."—*Fausset.* Comp. 1 Ki. xxi. 4.

b 1 Ki. ix. 4, 5. "These terms, 'truth,' 'perfect,' have a special reference to sincere endeavours to establish and maintain the pure worship of Jehovah, in opposition to all idolatrous intermixtures."—*Henderson.*

r. 3. *H. Grove*, i. 213.

a Comp. 2 Ki. xx. 5, 6.

b Eze. xl. 26, 31.

"Prayer, says St. Jerome, is a groan. Ah, our groans are prayers as well. The very cry of distress is an involuntary appeal to that invisible power whose aid the soul invokes."—*Mdm. Swetchine.*

c *& T. S.*

a *Spk. Com.*

b "It is not at all unlikely that Ahaz, who appears to have been fond of foreign objects of art (2 Ki. xvi. 10), obtained a sundial from Babylon."—*Henderson.* "The stairs, or dial, may have been a large structure; so that the motion of the shadow could be seen by the king through the window, as he lay on

eating grass: do you believe that?" "Certainly," said the three unbelievers. "I also saw pigs, cows, and sheep eating grass: do you believe that?" "Of course," was again replied. "Well, but the grass which they had formerly eaten had, by digestion, turned to feathers on the backs of the geese, to bristles on the backs of the swine, to wool on the sheep, and on the cows it had turned to hair: do you believe that, gentlemen?" "Certainly," they replied. "Yes, you believe it," he rejoined; "but do you understand it?" They were confounded, silent, and evidently ashamed.

9, 10. (9) **writing,** or "Eucharistical ode:" thanksgiving song. (10) **I said,** recalling the moanings of his despondent time, when Isaiah's message came to him. **cutting off,** *lit.* the pause, or the noontide. Hezekiah was then just at what we call "middle life." **grave,** Hades, the abode of spirits. **deprived,** of the years I might reasonably have hoped to live. He regarded this shortening of his life as a Divine judgment.

Divine wisdom (*v.* 9).—The text presents three things worthy of consideration. I. The character of the Teacher, God, whose wisdom is infinite. II. The subject of instruction,—knowledge, doctrine. III. The persons to be taught.[a]

11, 12. (11) **the Lord,** *Yah,* the Saviour. Hezekiah is distressed because God's promised deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrians he will not see realised. **land of the living,** *comp.* Ps. xxxiv. 12. **of the world,** *i.e.* the under world, Hades. In the grave the king could take no share in the grand human events in which he was so greatly interested.[a] (12) **shepherd's tent,** lightly put up for the night, and taken down in the morning.[b] **like a weaver,** or as the web is cut off from the beam. **with pining sickness,** lit. *from the thrum,* by wh. the web is joined to the beam.[c]

Human life a weaving (*v.* 12).—I. It is worth while looking at the work itself, the formation of personal character. In this work there is—1. The weaver's own; 2. Increasing progress; 3. A work of growing ease. II. It is worth while looking at the materials. 1. All supplied by the Master; 2. Only materials after all. III. It is worth while looking at the end. 1. The fabric lasts for ever; 2. The work is over at death; 3. The Master inspects it; 4. The Master disposes of it according to its worth. Apply:—(1) What a mercy if we are spared and furnished for this work; (2) What a motive to begin early; (3) How soon we shall have nothing but our work left.[d]

Carpet weaving in the East.—Mr. Harmer suggests whether the simile here used may not refer to the weaving of a carpet filled with flowers and other ingenious devices; and that the meaning may be, that just as a weaver, after having wrought many decorations into a piece of carpeting, suddenly cuts it off, while the figures were rising into view fresh and beautiful, and the spectator expecting he would proceed in his work; so, after a variety of pleasing transactions in the course of life, it suddenly and unexpectedly comes to its end. The Eastern people not only employed themselves in rich embroiderics, but in making carpets filled with flowers and other pleasing figures. Dr. Shaw gives us an account of the last. "Carpets, which are much coarser than those from Turkey, are made here in great numbers, his couch."—*Spk. Com.*

"The simple, constant, exclusive, absolute duty of the Christian is to believe God in Christ. If he doubt, fear, or disbelieve, he does that which is below duty, and actual sin."—*John Bate.*

a J. Wright, B.A.

v. 9. *Dr. R. Harris,* 187.

vv. 10, 11. *I. Christmas,* i. 101.

a "I, being with the inhabitants of the grave (lit. the place of ceasing to act), shall behold man no more." — *Wordsworth.*

b 2 Cor. v. 1, 4; 2 Pe. i. 13, 14.

c "His web, carefully woven, and rolled up as it advanced, has been but half finished; and it is to be suddenly cut in two."—*Spk. Com.*

d W. Wheeler.

v. 11. *Dr. A. Rees,* iv. 403.

v. 12. *M. Henry,* 1248.

"The shepherds of the East are often obliged to remove their flocks to distant places to find pasturage; hence their habitations are exceedingly light, in order to be the more easily removed. The 'lodge in a garden of cucum-

bers,' and the frail resting-place of the shepherd, greatly resemble each other."—*Roberts.*

"Embark in no enterprise which you cannot submit to the test of prayer."—*Ballou.*

and of all sizes. But the chief branch of their manufactures is the making of hykes, or blankets, as we should call them. The women alone are employed in this work (as Andromache and Penelope were of old), who do not use the shuttle, but conduct every thread of the woof with their fingers." Sir John Chardin says the Persians have a kind of needlework very different: the account he gives of it, in short, is as follows:—"Their tailors certainly excel ours in their sewing. They make carpets, cushions, veils for doors, and other pieces of furniture of felt, in mosaic work, which represents just what they please. This is done so neatly, that a man might suppose the figures were painted, instead of being a kind of inlaid work. Look as close as you will, the joinings cannot be seen."

13, 14. (13) as a lion, whose power and purpose seem to be resistless. day to night, the pain was unremitting. (14) clatter, "both birds are noted for the circles and evolutions which they make in the air, and their noise when setting out on their journeys."[a] oppressed, or like one in the hands of an exacting creditor.[b] undertake, word means *pledge oneself for another.*[c]

[a] "There is peculiar force and beauty in the comparison here made between the dying believer and migratory birds, about to take their departure to a distant and more genial clime."—*Henderson.*

[b] "Hezekiah here represents his disease as a bailiff that had arrested him, and was carrying him to the prison of the grave, and therefore prays that the Lord would bail him, or rescue him out of his hands."—*Gill.*

The litany of distress (v. 14).—We are often oppressed—1. Because we have not cried, "undertake for me;" 2. Because we have cried, "undertake for me:" 3. That we may cry, "undertake for me;" 4. We are, though "oppressed," never forsaken, for we can always cry, "undertake for me."[d]

The chattering crane.—No bird is more noisy than the crane, and none utters a harsher note. The Prophet, however, applies the verb *tsaphtsaph*, which signifies to chatter, to the loud and screaming cry of this bird: for which Mr. Harmer professes himself unable to account. "The word *tsaphtsaph*," says he, "translated chatter, appears to signify the low, melancholy, interrupted voice of the complaining sick, rather than a chattering noise, if we consult the other places in which it is used: as for the chattering of the crane, it seems quite inexplicable." But the difficulty had not, perhaps, appeared so great, if this respectable writer had observed that the connective *vau* is wanting in the original text, which may be thus considered: "As a crane, a swallow, so did I chatter." The two nouns are not, therefore, necessarily connected with the verb *tsaphtsaph*, but admit the insertion of another verb suitable to the nature of the first nominative. The ellipsis may be supplied in this manner: "As a crane, so did I scream, as a swallow, so did I chatter." Such a supplement is not, in this instance, forced and unnatural: for it is evidently the design of Hezekiah to say that he expressed his grief after the manner of these two birds, and therefore suitably to each; and he uses the verb *tsaphtsaph*, which properly corresponds only with the last noun, to indicate this design, leaving the reader to supply the verb which corresponds with the other. It is also perfectly agreeable to the manners of the East, where sorrow is expressed sometimes in a low interrupted voice, and anon in loud continued exclamations. The afflicted monarch, therefore, expressed his extreme grief after the manner of the Orientals, in loud screams like the crane, or in low interrupted murmurings like the swallow. According to some writers, the verb under consideration signifies the note of any bird, and by consequence may with equal propriety be employed to denote the

[c] Ge. xliii. 9, xliv. 32; Ps. cxix. 121—123.

d Stems and Twigs.

v. 14. *Dr. E. Payson*, iii. 253.

"A small sorrow distracts, a great one makes us collected; as a bell loses its clear tone when slightly cracked, and recovers it if the fissure is enlarged."—*Richter.*

loud scream of the crane, or the melancholy twitter of the swallow; if this be so, the difficulty admits of an easy solution.[e]

15, 16. (15) **spoken,**[a] so Hezekiah fully knew what God's will was. Sometimes the difficulty of submission lies in our not knowing what God's will concerning us is. **go softly,** walk humbly: as one in a solemn procession. **bitterness . . soul,** *i.e.* in perpetual contrition and humility; regarding these added years as a special gift of God's grace to him.[b] (16) **by these,** *i.e.* the Divine will, voice, and mercies.[c] **in all,** better, wholly in them. **recover me,** to full health and strength again.

The speed of life impressing probation (*v.* 16).—In illustration of this thought, let us notice—I. The fact that life is fast speeding away. II. That it deeply impresses our probation. 1. It rarely allows us to complete our plans; 2. It keeps us always in effort; 3. It gathers more thickly about us the changes, trials, etc., of life; 4. It soon hurries us from earthly scenes, and often in the full vigour of our power, etc. Apply:—(1) Retribution is near; (2) We should prepare; (3) No wonder this world does not satisfy; (4) Probation will soon end.[d]

Life crumbles away.—
Sad is our youth, for it is ever going,
Crumbling away beneath our very feet;
Sad is our life, for onward it is flowing
In current unperceived, because so fleet;
Sad are our hopes, for they were sweet in sowing,
But tares, self-sown, have overtopp'd the wheat;
Sad are our joys, for they were sweet in blowing,
And still, oh, still, their dying breath is sweet;
And sweet is youth, although it hath bereft us
Of that which made our childhood sweeter still;
And sweet is middle life, for it hath left us
A nearer good to cure an older ill;
And sweet are all things, when we learn to prize them,
Not for their sake, but His who grants them or denies them![e]

17, 18. (17) **for peace,** *i.e.* with a view to securing my peace and my good.[a] Comp. Ro. viii. 28; 2 Cor. iv. 17. Note, however, the marginal reading, "on my peace came great bitterness." **pit of corruption,** *see v.* 10, figs. for the *grave*. **cast back,** Oriental figure for oblivion.[b] (18) **cannot praise,** *etc.*,[c] they can take no part in the concerns of this life. That those we call *dead* have a conscious continuous existence is not here denied.[d]

Forgiveness known and enjoyed (*v.* 17).—These words of the speaker I shall—I. Explain. They may be considered as referring to—1. The recovery of his body; 2. The state of his soul. II. Improve. They show us—1. What should be our chief desire under any afflictive dispensation; 2. What exalted happiness we are privileged to enjoy.[e]

Note on v. 17.—Jeroboam preferred "molten images" to the true God, and therefore the Lord said unto him by Ahijah, "Thou hast cast Me behind thy back." The Levites said of the children of Israel, they "rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy law behind their backs." The Lord said of the wicked cities of Samaria and Jerusalem, "Thou hast forgotten Me, and cast Me behind thy back." This metaphor, to cast behind the back, is in common use, and has sometimes a very offensive signification.

e Paxton.

a "Obs. the sudden transition here from sorrow to joy; his heart is so full that he cannot find words to express his emotion."—*Wordsworth.*

b So he resolved, but he failed to keep his resolve. In those added years he made the great mistakes of his life.

"The passage may be rendered, 'I will behave myself humbly in remembrance of my past sorrow and sickness, fr. wh. I have been delivered by God's mercy.'"—*Fausset.*

1 Ki. xxi. 27, 29.

c De. viii. 2.

v. 16. *S. C. Wilks,* 1.

d *Dr. T. Edwards.*

e *De Vere.*

a "Not for my hurt, but with a view to my obtaining true peace."—*Knobel.*
b 1 Ki. xiv. 9; Neh. ix. 26; Ps. l. 17.
"To cast behind one's back, in Heb. and Arabic, is to forget, lose sight of, or exclude from view."—*Alexander.*
c Ps. vi. 5, xxx. 9, lxxxviii. 10–12; Ecc. ix. 10.
d "Plainly Hezekiah believed in a world of disembodied spirits."—*Fausset.*
e *C. Simeon, M.A.* *v.* 17. *J. Cennick,* 2. *v.* 18. *D. Sturney,* 302.

vv. 17—19. *Dr. Littleton*, 83; *C. Girdlestone*, 15.
vv. 18, 19. *A. G. Spencer*, 241; *C. Marriott*, i. 108; *H. Goodwin*, iii. 78.
f Roberts.

a C. Simeon, M.A. "The very honey and sweetness of this life is mixed with wormwood and gall. What day passeth over our heads without some cross or other, and cause of grief? He that drunk deepest of the cup of all worldly prosperity, and took his fill of them, yet at last concluded that all was but vanity and vexation of spirit. Our joys are uncertain, and our joys and griefs more sure. The evils which we fear befall us, and the comforts we desire fail us." —*S. Smith.*

v. 19. *T. Boston*, v. 586, vii. 449; *H. B. Wilson*, 88; *F. Trench*, 221; *J. H. Gurney*, 297.

a "From the ulceration on the body of Hezekiah, it has been concluded that the disease with which he was afflicted was the *plague*. This disease is not only characterised by great prostration of strength, and great mental depression, but also by certain local symptoms, as buboes, carbuncles, and livid spots, which discharge offensive

The expression is used to denote the most complete and contemptuous rejection of a person or thing. "The king has cast his minister behind his back," *i.e.* fully removed him, treated him with sovereign contempt. "Alas! alas! he has thrown my petition behind his back; all my efforts are defeated." "Yes, man, I have forgiven you; all your crimes are behind my back; but take care not to offend me again."*f*

19, 20. (19) living, those to whom life is prolonged, as mine has been. father to children, or one generation to another. known thy truth, so that Thy constant praise may be maintained. The *truth* of God is, especially, His faithfulness in keeping His promises. (20) ready, not in the Heb. The sentence should read, "Jehovah was for my salvation." we, *i.e.* Hezekiah and his people.

Praising God for His mercies (*v.* 19).—It is the duty of every living man to glorify his God. I. In the way of devout acknowledgment. Such a return is called for—1. From those who are not as yet prepared for death; 2. From those who are ready to meet their God. II. In the way of affectionate commendation. 1. We ought to transmit the truth to others; 2. The hope of doing so should make life regarded by us as an invaluable blessing. Apply:—(1) Let me call you to the performance of this duty; 2. And urge it by the consideration which influenced Hezekiah.*a*

A lost life.—A young man was converted during an illness which proved fatal, though this was not apprehended when he seemed to give his heart to Christ. When his physician announced an unfavourable change in his condition, he expressed entire resignation, and requested his friends to sing a hymn expressive of that feeling. An hour or two after, in the silence of the room, he was heard to say, "Lost, lost, lost!" This surprised his mother, and caused the immediate inquiry, "My son, are your hopes feeble?" "No, mother; but, oh, my lost lifetime! I'm twenty-four; and, until a few weeks since, nothing has been done for Christ, and everything for myself and my pleasures. My companions will think I've made a profession in view of death. Oh, that I could live to meet this remark, and do something to show my sincerity, and to redeem my lost, lost, lost life!"

21, 22. (21) boil, or swelling. Figs are used in a similar way to soften and bring to a head gatherings nowadays. Some think the boil indicates one feature of the disease of leprosy. Others think a painful and perilous *carbuncle* is indicated. Others, again, think it was an inflamed ulcer, produced by the plague.*a* (22) what . . sign, *comp.* 2 Ki. xx. 8.

Life reviewed.—Dr. Doddridge dreamed that he died, and, clad in a seraphic form, was borne by an angelic attendant to a glorious palace, in one of the rooms of which he left him, saying, "Rest here. The lord of the mansion will soon be with you: meanwhile, study the apartment." The next moment he was alone, and, upon casting his eyes round the room, he saw that the walls were adorned with a series of pictures. To his great astonishment, he found that it was his past life delineated there. From the moment when he had come into the world a helpless infant, and God had breathed into him the breath of life, unto the recent hour, when he had seemed to die, his whole existence

was there marked down: every event which had happened to him shone out conspicuously on its walls. Some he remembered as perfectly as though they had occurred but yesterday; others had passed from his memory into oblivion, until thus recalled. Things obscure in life, which had caused him doubt, perplexity, even uneasiness, were rendered clear now. The perils of his life were there,—the accidents which had overtaken him in his mortal state, all of which he had escaped from untouched or but slightly hurt. One in particular caught his attention,—a fall from his horse,—for he recollected the circumstance well: it had been a perilous fall, and his escape was marvellous. But scattered in every picture, all along the whole career, he saw merciful, guiding, shielding angels, who had been with him unsuspected throughout his life, never quitting him, always watching over him to guard him from danger. He continued to gaze on these wonderful pictures; and the more he gazed the greater grew his awe, his reverence, his admiration of the unbounded goodness of God. Not a turn did his life take, but it rested on some merciful act of interposition for him. Love, gratitude, joy, filled his heart to overflowing.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-NINTH.

1, 2. (1) **Merodach-baladan,**[a] Merodach was the name of a Babylonian god.[b] This king reigned from B.C. 721 to 709. **and a present,** in accordance with established Oriental practice. The alliance of Hezekiah might be valuable to Baladan in his revolt against Assyria. (2) **glad of them,** he did not see the wrongfulness of trusting this new power offering its alliance, and was quite flattered, and thrown off his guard by the gracious embassy.[c] **precious things,** *i.e.* his treasury. In this would be the spoils fr. the Assyrian camp, with, possibly, the stores of weapons, gold, etc.

Rev. Peter du Moulin.—During the awful massacre at Paris, by which so many Christians were removed from the present world, the celebrated Moulin crept into an oven, over the mouth of which a spider instantly wove its web; so that, when the enemies of the Christians inspected the premises, they passed by the oven with the remark that no one could have been there for some days. So easily can the blessed God devise means for the safety of His servants. The memoirs of the Rev. E. White, of Chester, by the late Rev. Dr. Fletcher, of Stepney, relate a very similar anecdote of one of the ancestors of that pious and useful minister.[d]

3, 4. (3) **from Babylon,** wh. does not seem at the time to have been regarded as an aggressive, dangerous power. Nebuchadnezzar subsequently raised it to the height of its fame. (4) **all . . seen,** Hezekiah does not perceive that he has done anything more than show courtesy to strangers from a far country.

Suspicion an enemy.—Suspicion is not less an enemy to virtue than to happiness; he that is already corrupt is naturally suspicious, and he that becomes suspicious will quickly be corrupt. It is too common for us to learn the frauds by which ourselves have suffered; men who are once persuaded that deceit will be employed against them sometimes think the same arts justified

matter, and often reach deep into the system."—*Henderson.*

One of the tortures of the Hohenstaufen family was that of a cell, which, at the prisoner's first entrance, presented an air of comfort and ease; so that it was not till he had been a few days confined, that he observed the dimensions of his chamber beginning to contract. The fact became more appalling every day. Slowly the sides drew closer; and the unhappy victim at last was crushed to death.

a Comp. 2 Ki. xx. 12–19; 2 Chr. xxxii. 31.

b Jer. l. 2.

c "Was it not a ground for reasonable self-congratulation that he would have so powerful an ally in case of any future Assyrian attack! So he fell away from the simplicity of faith."—*Spk. Com.*

d R. T. S.

"I would not wrong virtue, so tried, by the least shade of doubt: undue suspicion is more abject baseness even than the guilt suspected."—*Aaron Hill.*

"Suspicion is far more apt to be wrong than right; oftener unjust than just.

It is no friend to virtue, and always an enemy to happiness."—*Ballou.*

a Johnson.

a Da. i. 3.

A lady was once visiting at the house of a minister who had two sons. These two little boys were amusing themselves with some beautiful toys. The lady, on seeing them, said, "Well, boys, are these your treasures?" "No, ma'am," said the elder; "these are not our treasures: these are our playthings. Our treasures are in heaven."

"The way to wealth is as plain as the way to market. It depends chiefly on two words, 'industry and frugality;' that is, waste neither time nor money, but make the best use of both. Without industry and frugality, nothing will do, and with them, everything."—*Franklin.*

b J. Greet.

"Are you not surprised to find how independent peace of conscience is, and how much happiness can be condensed in the humblest home? A cottage will not hold the bulky furniture and sumptuous accommodation of a mansion; but if God be there, a cottage will hold as much furniture as might stock a palace."—*J. Hamilton.*

by the necessity of defence. Even they whose virtue is too well established to give way to example or be shaken by sophistry, must yet feel their love of mankind diminished with their esteem, and grow less zealous for the happiness of those by whom they imagine their own happiness endangered.*a*

5—7. (5) **the word,** the message that will reveal to you the sinfulness of your act. (6) **carried to Babylon,** intimating that the proud display of wealth wh. had been made would have a very different influence to that wh. Hez. had intended. It would show the Babylonians that Judæa was *worth conquering.* (7) **eunuchs,** court officers and servants: especially occupied in attending to the seraglios of Eastern courts.*a*

Household treasures.—

Household treasures, household treasures,
Gems of worth, say, what are they?
Walls of jasper, doors of cedar,
Arras of superb array?
Caskets of the costliest jewels,
Cabinets of ancient store,
Shrines where Art her incense offers,
Volumes of profoundest lore?

Household treasures, home's true jewels,
Deem I better far than those:
Prattling children, blithe and ruddy
As the dew-bespangled rose.
Tempt me not with gold of Ophir,
Wreathe not gems to deck my head;
Winsome hearthlings, home's fond angels,
Are the things I crave instead.

Sweet the song the skylark trilleth,
Bright the hue the rose assumes,
Pure the quiet-wooing lily
That upon the lakelet blooms;
But more sweet, more bright, and purer
Seem the lips and heart of youth;
Blessed seraphs, sent to utter
Syllables of love and truth.

Joyous creatures, choice possessions,
May-flowers in life's winter hour;
Beams of sunshine, chasing ever
Shadows that may cross the door;
Drops of rain, when care or anguish
Parch the spirit's genial springs;
Soothing minstrels, when unkindness
Snaps the heart's melodious strings.

Household treasures, household treasures,
Gems of worth, say, what are they?
All that wealth or grandeur proffer,
Soon, alas! must know decay;
But, 'midst amaranths unfading,
With the rose-stain'd cherubim,
Happy children, gone before us,
Swell the everlasting hymn.*b*

8. good, the language of submission, with some recognition of his mistake. peace, or prosperity in general. truth, the prevalence of true religion. "Hezekiah recognised that this was more than he deserved."[a]

The treasure of the Christian.—In a dark and stormy night, a ship sees afar off the shining of the lighthouse, which, as it plunges beneath the wave, is lost; and as struggling and rolling the water off from its deck, it comes trembling up again on the refluent wave, it gets a glimpse once more, only to lose it. So, in this world, men who propose bright aims to themselves in the midst of the turmoils of passion, the strivings of pride, and the biases of self-interest, in all the whirls of sympathy, and in the discordances of human example, find that they sometimes forget and sometimes violate their ideals; and the fight to maintain our ideals is almost as much as life itself is worth. You must frame your ideal; but after you have done that, you are like a man who makes a voyage. When you have marked the harbour, your work is not done. You have yet to bear hardness as good soldiers. Putting on your armour, you are to aim at things high and noble. And you must fight your way toward them through ten thousand hindrances. And only then shall you be crowned and laurelled when your victory is won, and you stand in Zion and before God. He who has in him absolute soul-qualities, and regards them as his chiefest treasures, and has them for his ideal —come weal or come woe, he has that for which he has been living. Bankrupt him you cannot. You may take his furniture, and strip his walls of pictures, and rob his library shelves of their books, and bear off his portfolios, and carry away his utensils, and leave him without any article of property whatsoever; and, passing by his hollow house, whose bare floors echo to every footstep, men may say, "He is peeled and bankrupt;" but it is not so. No, no! he is not peeled nor bankrupt whose house is a house not made with hands—whose house is the soul, whose treasures are those that neither thieves break through to steal, nor sheriffs. There is no bankruptcy with a man whose purpose and aspirations, and yearnings and longings, are in the direction of his manhood. And the blessing of an ideal is, that it stimulates men to live for those things that time and chance cannot touch nor harm.[b]

[a] 2 Chr. xxxii. 26.

"True repentance humbly acquiesces in all God's ways, and finds cause of thanksgiving in any mitigation." —*Fausset.*

"Very few men acquire wealth in such a manner as to receive pleasure from it. Just as long as there is the enthusiasm of the chase, they enjoy it; but when they begin to look around, and think of settling down they find that that part by which joy enters is dead in them." —*Beecher.*

"There is ever a certain languor attending the fulness of prosperity. When the heart has no more to wish, it yawns over its possessions, and the energy of the soul goes out, like a flame that has no more to devour."—*Young.*

[b] *H. W. Beecher.*

CHAPTER THE FORTIETH.

1, 2. (1) comfort ye, God's command to His Prophets. my people, those who have gone into captivity. (2) comfortably, Heb. *to the heart.* warfare, properly. *military service*, and, by implication, hardship, privation, suffering. double,[a] Je. xvi. 18, xvii. 18; the word is used poetically, to denote *abundance.*

The God of consolation (*v.* 1).—I. What God says to me as a minister of the Gospel. 1. That I am to comfort His people; 2. That I am to persevere in this; 3. That I am to proclaim comfort with His authority. II. What God bids me say to you as belonging to His people. 1. That your conflicts are near their end; 2. That your sins are expiated and forgiven; 3. That you will receive an abundant compensation for all sorrow on account of sin. Apply:—(1) The message is to the people of God; (2) Are you of their number?[b]

[a] "They had suffered as much chastisement as amply sufficed to clear the Divine character, and correct them of the great evil of idolatry."—*Henderson.*

Ro. v. 20.

[b] *G. Brooks.* *v.* 1. *Dr. M. Hole*, iii. 450; *Dr. J. Paterson*, 54; *Bp. Sandford*, ii. 22; *T. Gisborne*, ii.

320; *E. Cooper*, vii. 345: *J. C. Lloyd*, 85; *G. W. Woodhouse*, i. 151; *J. Summerfield*, 381; *J. Newton*, iv. 1.

c Arundell.

Messengers.—"When the Pasha of Magnesia went to take possession of his new appointment at Aleppo, he was attended by a large retinue of horse and foot soldiers, and other attendants, to the number of 2,000 persons. He was in the rear, with his harem. The road had been recently repaired for the passage of the Pasha to his government; affording a striking illustration of the Scripture, 'He shall prepare the way before Him.' The rough places were attempted to be made plain."[c]

3. **the voice**, as of a herald.[a] **prepare**, *etc.*, it was, and is, customary in the E. for heralds to require the public repair of the roads before the approach of a great king or general. This service has to be rendered at the cost of the people dwelling on the line of road.

Note on v. 3.—When a great prince in the East sets out on a journey, it is usual to send a party of men before him, to clear the way. The state of those countries in every age, where roads are almost unknown, and, from the want of cultivation, in many parts overgrown with brambles and other thorny plants, which renders travelling, especially with a large retinue, very incommodious, requires this precaution. The emperor of Hindostan, in his progress through his dominions, as described in the narrative of Sir Thomas Roe's embassy to the court of Delhi, was preceded by a very great company, sent before him to cut up the trees and bushes, to level and smooth the road, and prepare their place of encampment. Balin, who swayed the imperial sceptre of India, had five hundred chosen men, in rich livery, with their drawn sabres, who ran before him, proclaiming his approach, and clearing the way. Nor was this honour reserved exclusively for the reigning emperor; it was often shown to persons of royal birth. When an Indian princess made a visit to her father, the roads were directed to be repaired, and made clear for her journey; fruit trees were planted, water vessels placed in the road-side, and great illuminations prepared for the occasion. Mr. Bruce gives nearly the same account of the journey which the king of Abyssinia made through a part of his dominions. The chief magistrate of every district through which he had to pass was, by his office, obliged to have the roads cleared, levelled, and smoothed; and he mentions that a magistrate of one of the districts having failed in this part of his duty, was, together with his son, immediately put to death on the spot, where a thorn happened to catch the garment, and interrupt for a moment the progress of his majesty. This custom is easily recognised in that beautiful prediction: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." We shall be able, perhaps, to form a more clear and precise idea, from the account which Diodorus gives of the marches of Semiramis, the celebrated queen of Babylon, into Media and Persia. In her march to Ecbatane, says the historian, she came to the Zarecan mountain, which, extending many furlongs, and being full of craggy precipices and deep hollows, could not be passed without taking a great compass. Being therefore desirous of leaving an

a Mat. iii. 3; Mk. i. 3; Lu. iii. 4; Jno. i. 23.

"The edict of Cyrus is connected with the preaching of John the Baptist." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 3. *Dr. B. Dawson, Moyer Lec.* 1; *Dr. S. Glasse*, 203; *R. Cecil*, ii. 371; *Dr. H. Draper*, i. 51; *J. C. Hare*, i. 325; *Dr. N. Brady*, iii. 72.

"The situation of Babylon, on the river Euphrates, must have made causeways necessary to those that had occasion to go thither or come from thence, as marks set up must have been very requisite to those that had to pass through the deserts that lay between Chaldæa and Palestine: to both which conveniences Isaiah seems to refer, as well as to some other circumstances attending Eastern travelling, in that passage in which he prophetically describes the return of Israel

everlasting memorial of herself, as well as of shortening the way, she ordered the precipices to be digged down, and the hollows to be filled up; and at a great expense she made a shorter and more expeditious road: which to this day is called from her, the road of Semiramis. Afterward she went into Persia, and all the other countries of Asia subjected to her dominion; and wherever she went, she ordered the mountains and the precipices to be levelled, raised causeways in the plain country, and at a great expense made the ways passable. Whatever may be in this story, the following statement is entitled to the fullest credit: "All Eastern potentates have their precursors and a number of pioneers to clear the road, by removing obstacles, and filling up the ravines, and the hollow ways in their route. In the days of Mogul splendour, the emperor caused the hills and mountains to be levelled, and the valleys to be filled up for his convenience. This beautifully illustrates the figurative language in the approach of the Prince of Peace, when every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."[b]

4, 5. (4) **valley**, *etc.*, beautifully figurative of the removal of all obstructions and impediments. **crooked**, or perhaps the declivities. Eastern roads are not properly made and levelled, they are mere tracks marked by the passers, so they have to be virtually *made* for the progress of a prince. (5) **glory . . Lord**, in His redeeming grace heading, as it were, the return of His people from captivity. **see it**, *comp.* Lu. ii. 30.[a] **hath spoken**, Nu. xiv. 21.[b]

The levelling force of Christianity (*v.* 4).—Christianity does this two ways. I. By the levelling truths which it reveals. 1. A common God; 2. A common nature; 3. A common obligation; 4. A common depravity; 5. A common salvation. II. By the levelling spirit which it generates. It has regard to—1. The spiritual in man; 2. To the right in conduct; 3. To the eternal in destiny.[c]

6—8. (6) **the voice**, better, *a voice.*[a] **flesh is grass**, "all human things, however goodly, are transitory; God's promises alone are steadfast."[b] (7) **spirit . . Lord**,[c] *i.e.* the wind, which dries up the cut grass. **is grass**, or frail as the grass. (8) **stand for ever**,[d] through all the changes that may be going on around it. The expression is "a common Heb. phrase for perpetuity, security, and sure fulfilment."

Dores to their windows (*v.* 8).—Many have a deep regard for birds: Bible full of ornithological allusions; birds of Bible not stuffed, but living. Here is one of many verses about birds: the comparison: why do these come as doves, etc. I. They fly low; not as the eagle; humility. II. They fly for shelter: many dangers: birds of prey. III. They fly home: many without a home. IV. They fly in flocks; social life; fulness of converting grace.[e]

Queen Victoria and the Bible—The secret of England's greatness.—An African prince who was sent on an embassy with costly presents for Queen Victoria, from an Ethiopian court, preferred a modest request, that our beloved sovereign would tell him the secret of England's greatness and glory. Her Majesty did not, like Hezekiah, show the ambassador her diamonds, and her precious

from Babylon. The passage I mean is in the close of the sixty-second chapter. 'Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people, cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh.'"—*Paxton.*

b Paxton.

a Lu. iii. 6.

b "Trans. 'All flesh shall see that the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.'"—*Bengel.*

c *Dr. Thomas.*

v. 5. *C. J. Hoare*, 215.

a "The air is full of inspiration, of Divine calls and prophetic voices, and the forms of expression are naturally rapid and elliptical. After a pause, it is given to the Prophet what he shall cry."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b 1 Pe. i. 24, 25; Is. ii. 12; Ps. xc. 5.

c Ps. ciii. 16.

The withering E. wind of those countries, sent by Jehovah.

d "There is a tacit antithesis between the word of God and man;

what man says is uncertain and precarious, what God says cannot fail."—*Alexander.*

e Dr. De Witt Talmage.

f Bib.-Class Mag.

jewels, and her rich ornaments, but handing him a beautifully bound copy of the Bible, said, "Tell the prince that this is the secret of England's greatness." On the morning before her marriage-day Victoria called on a dying girl at Kensington, and presented her with a Bible as her truest comfort. It was found that her Majesty had written on the fly-leaf, "The gift of Victoria;" and it consists with our knowledge that the Bible is the queen's favourite gift, and that every member of the royal household, from the highest to the lowest, possesses the inestimable treasure.*f*

9. **O Zion,** *etc.*, as this announcement was made *to* the Jews, not *by* them, the sentence should read, "Get thee up upon a high mountain, thou that publishest good news to Zion." *a* **high mountain,** "local elevation extending the diffusion of the sound." *b* **be not afraid,** with any fear as to the fulfilment of what you promise. **your God,** manifested in the person of Messiah *c* (*v.* 3).

Behold your God (*v.* 9).—I. The God of the universe has revealed Himself—1. In nature; 2. In providence; 3. In His Son. II. The great God invites sinners to behold Him; the cities of Judah, where He was crucified; hence the message is to the vilest. III. The Almighty employs the Church to proclaim the revelation of Himself. The message should be proclaimed—1. Immediately; 2. Earnestly; 3. Sympathetically. IV. Application. How may I know the revealed God? 1. Know thyself; 2. Thy brother; 3. Thy father. Look with—(1) Attention; (2) Reverence; (3) Sorrow of heart. Then shall you behold Him with—(1) Rapturous admiration; (2) Boundless joy; (3) Holy confidence.*d*

a "Thou is the collective personification of the messengers who announce God's gracious purpose to Zion." —*Fausset.*

b "J. D. Michaelis compares the ancient practice of transmitting news by shouting from one hill-top to another, as described by Cæsar."—*J. A. Alexander.*

c Is. lii. 7; Zec. ix. 9; Ph. ii. 5, 6.

d Stems and Twigs.

10, 11. (10) **with strong hand,** *a* better, *as a strong one;* manifesting His strength; making a special exhibition of His power. **arm,** the symbol of power. *b* **for him,** *i.e.* His own power shall suffice, He will need no helpers. **his reward,** *comp.* Ph. ii. 9. **his work,** or the effect, result of His work. *c* (11) **feed,** *etc.*, figures borrowed from the most tender aspects of pastoral life. *d* **lambs,** the word means those of such tender age as still to be dependent on the ewes for sustenance. **with young,** Ge. xxxiii. 13.

The Divine Shepherd (*v.* 11).—I. The Church is here compared to a flock, which denotes—1. Its separation from the world; 2. Its union for purposes of religious fellowship; 3. Its continual need of succour and protection. II. Christ supplies the necessities of His people. This feeding includes—1. All necessary temporal blessings; 2. All that is needful to the welfare of their souls. III. The peculiar manner in which Jesus supplies the wants of His people—"like a shepherd." It denotes that—(1) He willingly supplies their wants; (2) In the best possible way; (3) That He constantly attends to all their wants.*e*

a Vitringa proposes to render "against the strong one," *i.e.* Satan.

b Is. lix. 16.

c Marg. *Recompense.*

d Ge. xlviii. 15; Ps. xxiii.; Jno. x. 1–18.

e Studies for Pulpit.

12. **who,** *etc.*, *i.e.* was it a man? *a* **waters,** both those on earth, and in the firmament. **span,** "the natural and universal measure of length. *b* **measure,** Heb. *tierce:* or *the third, i.e.* of an ephah. **scales,** or a steelyard. *c*

The incomparableness of the great God (*v.* 12).—I. That the greatest things in the material world are nothing to Him. II. That the greatest minds in the spiritual universe are nothing to Him, being so independent of all minds. 1. His universe must

a "The ver. sets forth the wisdom and power of God in the disposition and sustentation of the different parts of the universe. Comp. Job xxxviii." —*Henderson.*

be regarded as the expression of Himself; 2. His laws are the revelation of Himself; 3. His conduct is absolutely irresponsible. III. That the greatest institutions of human society are nothing to Him. IV. That the greatest productions of human labour are nothing to Him.[d]

13, 14. (13) who, obs. that these interrogative forms imply a strong negation. directed, or *meted out.* Spirit, or Divine creative agency.[a] his counsellor, Heb. "the man of His counsel." taught him, as a confidential adviser. (14) with whom, *etc.*, further appeal solemnly affirming the absolute independence of God.

The great Creator.—He who exhibited such matchless skill in the organisation of material bodies, and such exquisite taste in their formation, has superadded that ethereal beauty which enhances their permanent qualities, and presents them to us in the ever-varying character of the spectrum. Without this the foliage of vegetable life might have filled the eye and fostered the fruit which it veils, but the youthful green of its spring would have blended with the dying yellow of its autumn. If the objects of the material world had been illuminated with white light, all the particles of which possess the same degree of frangibility, and were equally acted upon by the bodies on which they fall, all nature would shine with a leaden hue, and all the combinations of external objects, all the features of the human countenance would have exhibited no other variety than that which they possess in a pencil-sketch, or a China-ink drawing. The rainbow itself would have dwindled into a narrow arch of white light, the stars would have shone through a grey sky, and the mantle of a wintry twilight would have replaced the golden vesture of the rising sun.[b]

15—17. (15) nations, other than Israel, and under whom Israel had suffered so long. Great and overwhelming to Israel, they were nothing to Israel's God. drop, *lit.* drop *hanging on* a bucket,[a] isles, *lit.* the coast-lands of the Mediterranean. little thing, or, as a grain of fine dust. (16) Lebanon, famous for its forests, and multitudes of living creatures. burn, *etc.*, as propitiatory offerings for man's redemption. The redemption God proposed to provide was far other than this.[b] (17) nothing, Da. iv. 35.

Note on v. 16.—The stupendous size, the extensive range, and great elevation of Libanus; its towering summits, capped with perpetual snow, or crowned with fragrant cedars; its olive plantations: its vineyards, producing the most delicious wines; its clear fountains and cold-flowing brooks; its fertile vales and odoriferous shrubberies—combine to form, in Scripture language, "the glory of Lebanon." But that glory, liable to change, has, by the unanimous consent of modern travellers, suffered a sensible decline. The extensive forests of cedar, which adorned and perfumed the summits and declivities of those mountains, have almost disappeared. Only a small number of these "trees of God, planted by His almighty hand," which, according to the usual import of the phrase, signally displayed the Divine power, wisdom, and goodness, now remain. Their countless number in the days of Solomon, and their prodigious bulk, must be recollected, in order to feel the force of that sublime declaration of

b The space from the end of the thumb to the end of the middle finger extended.
c Gesenius.
vv. 12—28. *J. Saurin*, i. 127.
d Dr. Thomas.

a "Who assigned Him the limits of His operations; marking out when He was to brood over the formless waste with life-giving energy (Ge. i. 2), and when to breathe in displeasure over corrupt creation, so that it should wither away?"—*Spk. Com.*

Ro. xi. 34; 1 Co. ii. 16.

b Brewster.

a "Not merely single men, but whole nations count for no more before the Almighty God than the small drop of a bucket which the bearer does not notice."—*Nägelsbach.*

b 1 Ki. viii. 27; Ps. l. 8—13; Is. lxvi. 1.

v. 15. *Dr. J. Duchal*, i. 294.

v. 16. *Alex. Pirie, Crit. Obs.* iii.

"Christ is God, stooping to the senses, and speaking to the heart of man."—*Adam.*

"Not mine is this saying, but the sentence of the sage,—Nothing is stronger than necessity."—*Euripides.*

c Paxton.

a Nägelsbach.

"In the light of these truths, how monstrous appeared the folly of those who made an image to represent or symbolise Deity."—*Spk. Com.*

"How should the *image-deities* of idolatrous Babylon be compared to this Almighty and unsearchable God of Israel?"—*Mat. Arnold.*

b De. iv. 15, 16; Ex. xx. 4.

c J. Ayre, M.A.

d R. T. S.

the Prophet: "Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering."[c]

18. liken God, "because God *has* not His like, therefore there is no creature form that is like Him, and under whose image one may represent Him visibly."[a] what likeness, "What image will you set by His side as His resemblance?"[b]

The Trinity (*v.* 18).—I would invite your attention—I. To the carnal notions men are apt to entertain of God. 1. We find that the knowledge of the true God soon failed from the minds of Noah's descendants; 2. We find the same temper at work in the Jews: 3. We may trace similar consequences down to our own times. II. There is thus a wholesome trial of our faith. In conclusion—1. There is an unfair use of language frequently made by those who reject the doctrine of the Trinity; 2. After all, the best knowledge is a practical knowledge.[c]

Good reasoning.—At Bukapuram, in the Northern Circars, a child, only eight years old, who had been educated in Christianity, was ridiculed on account of his religion by some heathens older than himself. In reply, he repeated what he had been taught respecting God. "Show us your God," said the heathens. "I cannot do that," answered the child, "but I can show yours to you." Taking up a stone and daubing it with some resemblance of a human face, he placed it very gravely upon the ground, and pushed it towards them with his foot. "There," said he, "is such a god as you worship. But to whom will you liken Me? or what likeness will ye compare unto Me? saith the Lord. I am Jehovah, and besides Me there is no God. A just God, and yet a Saviour!"[d]

a These represent the kinds of idol-figures made for the *rich.*

"Egyptian relics show that idols were suspended in houses by chains."—*Fausset.*

b "First Eng. *conman*, to know *with ability.*"—*Woolrych.*

c Je. x. 4, 5.

"When a young mother has her first babe, if it whimpers and cries she thinks that pains and diseases are about to seize it. But the grandmother, that has had the care of her own children and her children's children, is not troubled when she hears a child cry. Now God is the

19, 20. (19) melteth, casteth. graven image, so called because usually graven after it was cast. Casting work was prob. very rough, and required subsequent dressing with the graving tool. spreadeth . . gold, this represents another kind of idol—one of wood, covered with gold plates. chains, for the ornamentation of the figure.[a] (20) impoverished, or sunk in circumstances. tree . . rot, a piece of sound oak or cedar. cunning,[b] clever, skilful, not here used in a bad sense. not be moved, not shake on its pedestal.[c]

Egyptian idol-makers.—The particulars in this description of idol-making are more minute than we elsewhere find in the Bible. In many respects it seems so strikingly to agree with the process followed by the Egyptian idol-makers that we add the following particulars, for which we are indebted principally to Mr. Wilkinson's *Materia Hieroglyphica*, printed at Malta, 1828—1830. When the Egyptians intended to sculpture, they began by smoothing the surface, and drawing a number of parallel lines at equal distances, at right angles to which were traced other lines forming a series of squares. The size of these squares depended upon the size of the figures to be formed: but whatever was their size, nineteen parts or spaces were always allowed for the height of the human figure. If smaller figures were to be introduced, intermediate lines were then ruled which formed smaller squares, and consequently a figure of smaller proportion. May not this explain the marking out with a line and with a compass mentioned in Isaiah? After the first outlines of the figure had been traced, it was inspected by a master, who

wrote in various parts of it, in hieratic, such observations and instructions as he wished to be attended to by the artists in the progress of the work, and which of course were obliterated as the sculptures were formed. These were the work of other artists, distinct from the draughtsmen; and the remainder was completed by others, who added the colour, gilding, or polish, and who introduced the minute parts of dress and ornament. To this it may not be amiss to add that the sculptors were not only guided by certain artistic rules, but in the representations of their gods were bound to observe certain forms prescribed by the priests, and which it was accounted sacrilege to transgress. The more effectually to accomplish this object, and preclude the intervention of anything forbidden by the laws in subjects accounted sacred, the profession of an artist was not allowed to be exercised by any common or illiterate person. Indeed, Mr. Wilkinson has shown the probability that they were, in some sort, attached to, and formed a branch of the priesthood. These observations apply primarily to working in stone; whereas the text appears to speak of wooden images, overlaid, it would seem, with metal. But the same essential rules appear to have been observed, in the main, whatever were the materials of which the idols were formed. The paintings of Egypt afford very ample illustration of working in wood and the operations of carpenters, from the felling of the tree, and the sawing up of the wood, to the fabrication of various articles of domestic and warlike use. When a beam was to be cut into planks or poles, it was set on end and sawed down perpendicularly, not horizontally over a sawpit, as by our sawyers. This is sawed nearly down to the uppermost rope, and the workman is applying another below before he takes that one off. This is shown by a saw which remains in the wood nearly down to the first rope. Another man, who, from a common neglect of perspective in Egyptian paintings, seems to be near and chopping at this same beam, is really, as Rosellini observes, engaged in a distinct and independent operation—that of cleaving the piece of wood on which he has placed one of his feet. This figure is chiefly interesting as showing that a hatchet very similar to our own was in common use at this very early date.[d]

21, 22. (21) **known**, a spirited appeal to the Jews, who had been so fully blessed with Divine revelations. But even this, concerning God, they might have known by the light of nature.[a] *Ye* and *you* are here emphatic. (22) **it is he**, or *Him*. *The One*. **sitteth . . circle**, poss. the circular dome that spans the earth, which we call the heavens, is here meant.[b] **grasshoppers**, Le. xi. 22. **curtain**, thin transparent veil.

Voice of God.—

God hath a voice that ever is heard
In the peal of the thunder, the chirp of the bird;
It comes in the torrent, all rapid and strong,
In the streamlet's soft gush as it ripples along;
It breathes in the zephyr, just kissing the bloom;
It lives in the rush of the sweeping simoom;
Let the hurricane whistle, or warblers rejoice,
What do they tell thee but God hath a voice?
God hath a presence, and that ye may see
In the fold of the flower, the leaf of the tree;

everlasting Father of nations. For over six thousand years He has been educating them toward manhood. There is no possible fantasy, or error, or deceit that is not perfectly familiar to Him. There is not a road of prosperity or of adversity that He does not know. There is not a path that nations have ever trod, or that they will ever tread, with which He is not acquainted. And, you that are distressed, where is your God? Are you men that have faith in God when the sun shines, and that have no faith in Him when it is cloudy? Are you men that have arms when there is no enemy at hand, but that throw them away when the enemy comes? God is a God for times of war as well as a God for times of peace." — *H. W. Beecher.*

d Dr. Kitto.

a Ro. i. 20; see Ac. xiv. 17, xvii. 24.

b "From the use of the word *sphere*, or *circle*, here, and Job xxvi. 10, Pr. viii. 27, it is evident the ancients had a knowledge of the spherical form of the earth."—*Henderson.*

Ps. civ. 2.

"Carry yourself amongst worldly employments as

though you were amongst thieves; they are apt to pick your hearts slily."—*Steele.*

c Eliza Cook.

In the sun of the noon-day, the star of the night;
In the storm-cloud of darkness, the rainbow of light;
In the waves of the ocean, the furrows of land;
In the mountains of granite, the atom of sand;
Turn where ye may, from the sky to the sod,
Where can ye gaze that ye see not a God?[c]

23, 24. (23) **princes . . vanity,** Heb. *tohu,* a formless waste.[a] (24) **shall not be,** strictly, *they have not been.* The princes and judges are often compared to tall trees.[b] **sown,** so their race becomes extinct. **blow,** *etc.*, before they have taken firm root.[c] Possibly the reference of this *v.* is to the idols referred to in *vv.* 19, 20, with special reference to their having no *life* in them.

Whirlwinds (*v.* 24).—Whirlwinds occasionally sweep along the country in an extremely frightful manner, carrying away in their vortex, sand, branches, and stubble, and raising them to an immense height in the air. Very striking is the allusion which the Prophet makes to this phenomenon: "He shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble." With equal force and beauty the Psalmist refers to the rotatory action of the whirlwind, which frequently impels a bit of straw over the waste, like a wheel set in rapid motion: "O my God, make them like a wheel, as the stubble before the wind." Sometimes it comes from no particular point, but moves about in every direction. Mr. Bruce, in his journey through the desert of Senaar, had the singular felicity to contemplate this wonderful phenomenon in all its terrific majesty, without injury, although with considerable danger and alarm. In that vast expanse of desert, from west and to north-west of him, he saw a number of prodigious pillars of sand at different distances, moving at times with great celerity, at others stalking on with majestic slowness; at intervals he thought they were coming in a very few minutes to overwhelm him and his companions. Again they would retreat so as to be almost out of sight, their tops reaching to the very clouds. There the tops often separated from the bodies; and these, once disjointed, dispersed in the air, and appeared no more. Sometimes they were broken near the middle, as if struck with a large cannon-shot. About noon they began to advance with considerable swiftness upon them, the wind being very strong at north. Eleven of these awful visitors ranged alongside of them about the distance of three miles. The greatest diameter of the largest appeared to him, at that distance, as if it would measure ten feet. They retired from them with a wind at south-east, leaving an impression upon the mind of our intrepid traveller to which he could give no name, though he candidly admits that one ingredient in it was fear, with a considerable deal of wonder and astonishment. He declares it was in vain to think of flying; the swiftest horse, or fastest sailing ship, could be of no use to carry them out of this danger; and the full persuasion of this riveted him to the spot where he stood. Next day they were gratified with a similar display of moving pillars, in form and disposition like those already described, only they seemed to be more in number and less in size. They came several times in a direction close upon them; that is, according to Mr. Bruce's computation, within less than two miles. They became, immediately

a Je. iv. 23.
Ps. ii. 2, 10.

b Ps. xxxvii. 35; Da. iv. 10.

c "Our thoughts are carried chiefly to Judah. Men might have supposed that David was to be the plant of renown; that Sol.'s line was to be the seed which the Lord had blessed; that Hezekiah was the rod from the stock of Jesse; but none of these proved to be so."—*Spk. Com.*

"Just as the mountain supports the tiny blade of grass and the modest floweret, as well as the giant pine or cedar; just as that ocean bears up in safety the sea-bird seated on its crested waves, as well as the leviathan vessel; so while the great Keeper of Israel can listen to the archangels' song, and the seraphs' burning devotions, He can carry in His bosom the feeblest lamb of the fold, and lead gently the most sorrowing spirit." *Rev. J. R. Macduff, D.D.*

"If the barbarian ambassador came expressly to the Romans, to negotiate, on the part of his country, for permission to be their servants, declaring that a volun-

after sunrise, like a thick wood, and almost darkened the sun; his rays shining through them for near an hour, gave them an appearance of pillars of fire. At another time they were terrified by an army (as it seemed) of these sand pillars, whose march was constantly south; a number of which seemed once to be coming directly upon them: and though they were little nearer than two miles, a considerable quantity of sand fell around them. On the twenty-first of November, about eight in the morning, he had a view of the desert to the westward as before, and the sands had already begun to rise in immense twisted pillars, which darkened the heavens, and moved over the desert with more magnificence than ever. The sun shining through the pillars, which were thicker, and contained more sand apparently than any of the preceding days, seemed to give those nearest them an appearance as if spotted with stars of gold. A little before twelve the wind at north ceased, and a considerable quantity of fine sand rained upon them for an hour afterward. To this species of rain Moses was no stranger: he had seen it, and felt its effects in the sandy deserts of Arabia, and he places it among the curses that were, in future ages, to punish the rebellion of his people: "The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed."[d]

25, 26. (25) **equal**, so as to make even comparison possible. **the Holy One**, "this is the final distinction bet. God and the creature," He is *holy*. (26) **host**, the multitude, and orderly array of the stars. **by names**, as soldiers summoned by a muster-roll. **faileth**, or is missing.[a]

God is love.—

How great soe'er things being or done of man,
To be, to do, is less than to believe:
For to believe God is to know Him love.
As on some hill at day-dawn we see born
Of early light the sun, head of all worlds,
Who hour by hour exalts his own place; truth
Instructing us the while it is earth beneath
Which rolls away; he, lord of time, in his
Eternal zenith throned, climbs not nor stoops;
So they, in spirit knowledge wisest, know,
As more and more the soul is purified,
It is their own fleshly ignorance from them rolled,
Which opens them to heaven and to God's light,
Unvarying and supreme, due ingress gives.
It is we who change towards Him, not He towards us;
As therefore to the sun, nor east nor west,
Nor day nor night is, but one timeless noon
So from the Lord of life unbounded beams
One everlasting effluence, which is love.
To gain this, to prepare for this, is all.[b]

27, 28. (27) **O Jacob**, reminding the disconsolate Jews of Ge. xxxii. 26. **my way**," *etc.*, the despairing language of the captives in Babylon. **judgment . . God**, or my cause is neglected by my God.[b] (28) **not known**, *comp. v.* 21. **heard**, by the tradition of the fathers. **everlasting God**, Ge. xxi. 33; De. xxxiii. 27. **no searching**, Ps. cxlvii. 5.

tary submission to a foreign power was preferable to a wild and disorderly freedom, well may the Christian triumph in the peace to be obtained by an unreserved submission to Him who is emphatically called the God of order."—*Buck.*

"The wind, a sightless labourer, whistles at his work."—*Wordsworth.*

d Paxton.

a "'By reason of abundance of (their inner essential) force and firmness of strength, not one of them is driven astray;' referring to the sufficiency of the physical forces with which He has endowed the heavenly bodies, to prevent all disorder in their motions."—*Horsley.*

v. 25. *J. Weemse*, i. 74.

"The great lever by which to raise and save the world is the unbounded mercy and love of God."—*Beecher.*

b Bailey.

a "Covered by so dense a mass of misery, that even His light could not penetrate."—*Spt. Com.*

b "They had been so long in

the power of their enemies, that they concluded they were quite overlooked by the God of their fathers."—*Henderson.*

c Zeta in 400 Sks.

a 1 Jno. ii. 14.
b C. Jones.
"The man who seeks first the things of this world in preference to those which are spiritual, is like the man who should build a pyramid with its apex on the ground, and its base in the air, which, before he had proceeded far, would tumble over and crush him under its ruins."—*John Bate.*

a "To make still clearer the contrast between the power and wisdom of the God of Israel and of the gods of the heathen, these latter are challenged to show and compare their performances beside His."—*Mel. Arnold.* Ps. xlvi. 10; Ha. ii. 20; Zec. ii. 13.
b Je. xxv. 22.
c "Jehovah here summons the idolaters themselves to enter into controversy with Him. The challenge is a general one, directed to the whole heathen world."—*J. A. Alexander.*
v. 1. *W. Reading,* iv. 400.
vv. 1—29. *Dr. R. Gordon,* iii. 192.
d C. H. Spurgeon.
e French.

a "The man called is Cyrus, from Persia, which is easterly both

Trust in the Lord recommended (*vv.* 27—31).—I. The doctrine taught. 1. The existence of a Supreme Creator: 2. The doctrine of a superintending Providence; 3. The efficacy of religion. II. The reproof administered. III. The correction offered. IV. The instruction afforded. 1. To consider the Lord as the only proper object of worship and of confidence; 2. To expect confidently; 3. Even in times of trial we may mount above the world; 4. We may make rapid and delightful progress in religion; 5. That we may persevere in piety.[c]

29—31. (29) faint, or weary with long and seemingly hopeless waiting. (30) youths, whose glory and boasting are in their *strength.*[a] (31) wait upon, or wait for. as eagles, which are noted for the untiring strength of their wing. Some commentators refer this to the annual moulting of the eagle.

Waiting upon God (*v.* 31).—I. The characters described. The waiting includes earnest desire, confident expectation, patient reliance. II. The blessings promised. 1. Exemplary privileges in the exercises of the Divine life; 2. A perpetual renewal of the powers of Divine grace; 3. Persevering endurance; 4. Ultimate success.[b]

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIRST.

1. keep silence, or "listen in silence to Me."[a] islands, a term used to include all maritime countries: all regions beyond the sea.[b] renew their strength, collect all their force to answer Me.[c] come near, so as to take a close and careful review of the evidence (comp. Is. i. 18).

Renewals (*v.* 1).—I. All things on earth need to be renewed. II. Man's life cannot be sustained without renewal from God. III. We must also repair the waste of the soul. 1. By feeding on the Word of God; 2. By listening to the Word; 3. By the table of the ordinances. IV. Without constant restoration we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of hell, for the stern afflictions of heaven, or even for strifes from within.[d]

Departure from God.—

Not Thou, O Lord, from us, but we
Withdraw ourselves from Thee.

When we are dark and dead,
And Thou art covered with a cloud,
Hanging before Thee like a shroud,
So that our prayer can find no way,
Oh! teach us that we do not say,
"Where is Thy brightness fled?"

But that we search and try,
What in ourselves has wrought this blame,
For Thou remainest still the same,
But earth's own vapours earth may fill
With darkness and thick clouds, while still
The sun is in the sky.[e]

2, 3. (2) the righteous, Cyrus is undoubtedly here referred to;[a] and regarded as the minister of God's righteousness,

called . . foot, fig. for engaging in his service, in order to follow him and perform the duties prescribed.[b] gave . . nations, "first the kingdom of the Medes, then Lydia, the kingdom of the rich Crœsus, and the Greek cities of Asia Minor."[c] gave . . bow, better rend. "Kings he shall subdue (and) shall make like dust (with) his sword, and like driven chaff (with) his bow." (3) safely, or securely. way . . feet, unknown ways, thro' unknown countries.

Love of God.—

All things that are on earth shall wholly pass away,
Except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye.
The forms of men shall be as they had never been;
The blasted groves shall lose their fresh and tender green;
The birds of the thicket shall end their pleasant song,
And the nightingale shall cease to chant the evening long;
The kine of the pasture shall feel the dart that kills,
And all the fair white flocks shall perish from the hills;
The goat and antlered stag, the wolf and the fox,
The wild boar of the wood, and the chamois of the rocks,
And the strong and fearless bear, in the trodden dust shall lie;
And the dolphin of the sea, and the mighty whale shall die,
And realms shall be dissolved, and empires be no more;
And they shall bow to death, who ruled from shore to shore;
And the great globe itself (so the holy writings tell),
With the rolling firmament, where the starry armies dwell,
Shall melt with fervent heat—they shall all pass away,
Except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye.

4—7. (4) calling . . beginning, "preparing for this overthrow during many successive generations, wh. from the beginning He summoned into existence."[a] first . . last, Jehovah existed before all things, and He will outlast them all.[b] (5) drew near, *etc.*, consulting together how to defend themselves against the conquering Persians:[c] or to take note how the controversy would be decided bet. Jehovah and the idol-gods. (6) good courage, and set to work to make, and secure the favour of, new gods. (7) goldsmith, or founder; smith. sodering, or, "saying of the soder, it is good." with nails, to keep it up in its place.[d]

The voluntary principle (*v.* 6).—I. It is no disparagement to this principle that Pagans acted on it, unless it be better that Christians should support their religion on compulsion. II. See what Pagans have done in the world, and consider what reasons Christians have for doing more. III. The help rendered should be in some fair proportion to ability. IV. Each should do something, for the general can only prosper by the particular. V. Courage in this matter is greatly increased by the conjunction of associated workmen.[e]—*Co-operation* (*v.* 7).—I. The commonwealth is not served till the different branches of industry merge their jealousies in good will; 2. The composition of the earth we walk over offers a strong hint of this intention; 3. The Creator has given many hints of this social principle; 4. When men forget to help each other, God overrules their plans, and makes them do it, to a certain extent, in despite of themselves.[f]

God in redemption.—The character of God is but little seen but from revelation. Redemption—that is the glass which reflects its true beauty. Look at the light of day: it presents one uni-

to Babylonia and to Palestine. Cyrus had the character of a mild and just prince, and Xenophon, the Greek historian, chose him for his ideal of a virtuous ruler. . . His religion, the religion of Persia, rejected and forbade idols like the religion of Israel."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b "To call to one's foot is a Heb. idiom for calling to one's service, or summoning to take a place among one's followers."—*J. A. Alexander.*

c "The Medes, Hyrcanians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Lydians, Carians, Babylonians, etc."—*Henderson.*

a Spk. Com.

b Is. xliii. 10, xliv. 6, xlviii. 12; Re. i. 17. xxii. 13.

c "These verses describe the consternation of the idolatrous inhabitants of Asia Minor, and the islands and coasts of Greece, on learning the rapid successes of Cyrus; and the increase of their national devotions, in order to obtain the protection of their gods."—*Henderson.*

"From history we learn that the Cumæans consulted the Milesian oracle, 'alarmed at the power of the Persians.' And Crœsus sent round to all the principal oracles for their advice."—*Spk. Com.*

form and undistinguished and unbroken mass of light: the many beautiful rays and colours which united together to form that light are lost and hid from our eyes. It is silence only that has discovered to us this fact. But when we take the prism, and cause this apparently simple and uncompounded light to pass through its sides, we are charmed with the beauty of its rays, the richness and variety of its colours: so, when we turn away from the glass which redemption holds up, how many of the attributes of God are hid from us! That it is which (as the prism separate and untwists the rays of light) brings to light the hidden glories of the Godhead. There it is: His justice and mercy, His holiness and purity and love, beam, and, like rays of light, pour their effulgence on our astonished sight; and the Almighty shines forth in all the glory and beauty of these attributes now manifested and revealed to His creation.

8, 9. (8) **Israel**, the nation of Israel. **my servant**, as worshippers of the true God. **chosen**, De. iv. 37, vii. 6, 7. **my friend**, 2 Chr. xx. 7;[a] Ja. ii. 23. (9) **chief men**, better, *the corners*. The word used properly signifies the angles, joints, or elbows of the arm.

Servants (*v.* 9).—1. It is by Divine grace that we are made servants of God; 2. Unfaithful, unprofitable, yet servants; 3. Once we were servants of sin; 4. Not only servants, but chosen ones; 5. We are, too, His servants for ever.[b]

Affections of God.—We describe desire in God as an affection for obtaining the works of righteousness which have been prescribed to creatures endued with understanding, and for bestowing on them "the recompense of reward" (Ps. v. 3—5, lxxx. 13—16; Isa. xlviii. 18, 19). To this is opposed that affection according to which God abhors the works of unrighteousness, and the omission of a remuneration (Jer. v. 7—9). Joy is an affection arising from the presence of a thing that is suitable, such as the fruition of Himself, the obedience of the creature, the communication of His own goodness, and the destruction of His rebels and enemies (Isa. lxii. 5; Ps. lxxxi. 13; Prov. i. 24—26). Grief, which is its opposite, has its origin in the disobedience and the misery of the creature, and in the occasion given by His people for blaspheming the name of God among the Gentiles. Nearly allied to this is repentance, which, in God, is nothing more than a change of the thing willed or done, on account of the act of a rational creature (Gen. vi. 6; Jer. xviii. 8—10). Hope is an attentive expectation of a good work due from the creature, and by the grace of God capable of being performed. Despair arises from the pertinacious wickedness of the creature, who is "alienated from the life of God," and hardened in evil, and who, after "he is past feeling," his conscience having been "seared with a hot iron," has "given himself unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Jer. xiii. 23: Eph. iv. 18, 19). Anger is an affection of depulsion in God, through the punishment of the creature who has transgressed His law; by which He brings upon the creature the evil of misery for his unrighteousness, and takes the vengeance which is due to Himself, as an indication of His love of righteousness and His hatred of sin. When this is vehement, it is called "fury" (Isa. lxiii. 3—5; Ezek. xiii. 13, 14; Isa. xxvii. 4; Jer. ix. 9; Deut. xxxii. 35; Jer. x. 24, xii. 13; Isa. lxiii. 6).[c]

d "The sarcasm consists in making the idolaters dependent upon idols, which are themselves dependent upon common workmen, and the most trivial mechanical operations, for their form and their stability."—*J. A. Alexander.*

e J. Foster.

f Dr. F. T. Huntington.

a "'*Khalil-Allah*,' or, as he is more usually called, '*El Khalil*,' simply, 'The Friend,' is a title which has, in Mussulman countries, superseded altogether his own proper name."—*Stanley.*

De. vii. 6, x. 15.

v. 8. *J. Brown, Bamp. Lec.* 33.

vv. 9, 10. *Bossuet*, xvi. 377.

b C. H. Spurgeon.

"O the inconstant and rotten ground of service! You may see, 'tis ev'n like him, that in a winter's night takes a long slumber o'er a dying fire, as loth to part from't; yet parts thence more cold than when he first sate down."—*Webster.*

"Love is the hardest lesson in Christianity; but, for that reason, it should be most our care to learn it."—*W. Penn.*

c Arminius.

10. **fear thou not,** however other nations may fear. Cyrus would prove no enemy to God's people, &c. God was using him to work out His purposes. **dismayed,** so as, like the nations, to look about anxiously for help. **will strengthen,** or perhaps *have strengthened*, etc. **right . . righteousness,** or "with My just right hand."[a]

Strength (*v.* 10).—I. We all need to be strengthened. 1. For temptation assails us: 2. The world is around us; 3. There is sin within us: 4. There are duties before us. II. God has a great reserve of strength with which to discharge this engagement. He who is able to uphold the universe will never prove unable to fulfil His promises.

11, 12. (11) **ashamed,** with the shame of defeat. **strive,** or "the men of thy strife." (12) **contended,** or "thy men of quarrel," *i.e.* they who quarrelled and made war with thee. **nothing,** *etc.*, "the words used strictly denote non-existence and annihilation."[a]

The effective spread of Christianity a growth (*v.* 11).—I. It is a natural growth. There is—1. Gradualness; 2. Variety; 3. Beauty. II. It is a valuable growth. 1. It produces true morality, righteousness; 2. True religion, praise. III. It is a universal growth. IV. It is a Divine growth. For—1. He prepares the soil: 2. Deposits the seed: 3. Imparts the quickening influence. Apply:—(1) This subject corrects an error in Christian propagandism; (2) Indicates the true method of teaching the Gospel; (3) Affords a touchstone to the character.[b]

13, 14. (13) **will hold,** better, *holdeth.* **will help,** or *have helped thee.* (14) **worm Jacob,** "creature of the dust, prostrate and helpless;"[a] comp. Ps. xxii. 6. **ye men,** or *few men.*

Fear not (*v.* 14).—I. Before we can do anything for God there must be a sense of weakness. 1. This is learned by contemplation; 2. By suffering; 3. By labour. II. There must be trust in promised strength. III. There must be the removal of fear by this promise. 1. Fear is painful; 2. Is weakening; 3. Dishonours God.[b]

Reverence for God.—With what profound veneration does it become us to enter the presence, and to receive the favours, of the awful majesty of heaven and earth; and how ought we to dread grieving or offending goodness so great, so glorious, so venerable! To illustrate this remark, suppose that the sun, whose brightness, even at this distance, you cannot gaze upon without shrinking, were an animated, intelligent body, and that, with a design to do you good, he should leave his place in the heavens and gradually approach you. As it drew more and more near, its apparent magnitude and effulgence would every moment increase; it would occupy a larger and larger portion of the visible heavens, until at length all other objects would be lost, and yourselves swallowed up in one insufferably dazzling, overpowering flood of light. Would you not, in such circumstances, feel the strongest emotions of awe, of something like fear? Would a knowledge that the glorious luminary was approaching with a benevolent design for your good, banish these emotions? What, then, ought to be the feelings of a sinful worm of the dust, when the Father of lights, the eternal Sun of the universe, who dwells in the high and holy place, and in the contrite heart, stoops from

a "The right hand that does right."—*Nägelsbach.*

v. 10. *Dr. T. Crisp*, ii. 173.

a J. A. Alexander.

"The breath of Divine knowledge is the bellows of Divine love, and the flame of Divine love is the perfection of Divine knowledge."—*Quarles.*

b Dr. Thomas.

a "However weak and despised and trodden under foot thou mayest be, in thy captivity and exile, yet fear not, I will help thee."—*Wordsworth.* Is. xliii. 1, xliv. 1, 2.

vv. 14, 15. *T. Boston*, vi. 328.

b C. H. Spurgeon.

"When the soul leaves God once, and looks downward, what is there to stay it from disquiet? Remove the needle from the polestar, and it is always stirring and trembling, never quiet till it be right again. So, displace the soul by taking it from God, and it will never be quiet. The devil cast out of heaven and out of the Church, keeps

ado: so do unruly spirits led by him." *Sibbes.*

c Payson.

a "The *mowrej* is a flat, heavy, wooden slab, some 5ft. long by 3ft. wide, slightly turned up in front. The under surface is thickly studded with nobs of hard stone or iron. The driver stands on the *mowrej*, urging the oxen on with his formidable ox-goad. The oxen advance in front, 'treading out' the grain, and the mowrej follows, crushing and cutting the straw with its *teeth*, till it is reduced almost to dust."—*Porter.*

b "The highest, and strongest, and most stubborn of thine enemies."—*Matt. Henry.*

c "I have frequently seen the effects of these winds in the East: they whirl round with great violence, and carry high up into the air dust, straw, branches of trees, and other substances, each circle becoming smaller till it reaches the apex."—*Roberts.*

d C. Simeon, M.A.

It is with us as with children learning to walk, who can stand up no longer than they are held by the hand; or those who are learning to swim, who sink to the bottom as soon as they are left alone. If God

His awful throne to visit him, to smile upon him, to pardon him, to purify him from his moral defilement, to adopt him as a child, to make him an heir of heaven, to take possession of his heart as his earthly habitation?[c]

15, 16 (15) **threshing instrument,**[a] either a sledge armed with iron and sharp stones, or a system of rough rollers (*tribulum*). **mountains,**[b] allegorical for empires and kingdoms. (16) **fan them,** alluding to another agricultural operation, that of *winnowing*. **the whirlwind,** name applied to winds having a quick rotary motion.[c]

The worm Jacob threshing the mountains (*vv.* 14—16).—Addressing his people, God declares—I. Their character. II. Their labours. III. Their successes. IV. Their triumphs. Learn hence—1. The folly of unbelief; 2. The need of constant exertions.[d]

Threshing-floors.—They are arranged all round the town, and the scene is picturesque and novel. The most common mode of threshing is with the ordinary slab, called *mowrej*, which is drawn over the floor by a horse or yoke of oxen, until not only the grain is shelled out, but the straw itself is ground up into chaff. To facilitate this operation, bits of rough lava are fastened into the bottom of the *mowrej*, and the driver sits or stands upon it. It is rare sport for the children to sit on these slabs, and even our own delight, to get out to the *baidar*, as the floor is called, and ride round on the *mowrej*. The Egyptian *mowrej* is a little different from this, having rollers which revolve on the grain, and the driver has a seat upon it, which is certainly more comfortable. In the plains of Hamath I saw this machine improved by having circular saws attached to these rollers. It is to this instrument, I suppose, that Isaiah refers: "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them." This passage has several allusions which we can readily understand and explain in this country. The intention of the farmer is to beat and grind down his hills of grain to chaff, and much of it is reduced to fine dust, which the wind carries away. Very little use is now made of the fan, but I have seen it employed to purge the floor of the refuse dust, which the owner throws away as useless. The references to the wind, which drives off the chaff, are numerous in the Bible, and very forcible. The grain, as it is threshed, is heaped up in the centre of the "floor," until it frequently becomes a little mound, much higher than the workmen. This is particularly the case when there is no wind for several days, for the only way adopted to separate the chaff from the wheat is to toss it up into the air, when the grain falls in one place, and the chaff is carried on to another. Isaiah here speaks of the whirlwinds, and it is a curious fact that whirling currents are extremely common on the plains. They start up as if by magic or spirit influence, and rush furiously onward, swooping dust and chaff up to the clouds in their wild career. On some floors here at Yebna, there was no machine of any kind, and boys rode and drove horses round on the grain, somewhat as we did in our barns when I was a boy. It was this, in part, which made the scene so peculiar. Some ran round from left to right, and

others the reverse, and no one continued long in the same direction, but changed every few minutes, to keep the animals from getting dizzy. The command of Moses not to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn is literally obeyed to this day by most farmers, and you often see the oxen that draw the *morrej* eating from the floor as they revolve.[c]

17, 18. (17) poor . . water, a promise that should be referred to the difficulties of the journey back from Babylon to Palestine.[a] faileth, or *is rigid, parched.* (18) rivers, recalling the provisions made during the wilderness journey from Egypt.[b]

Note on . . 18.—A most important pastoral duty in the Eastern regions is to provide water for the flock. The living fountain and the flowing stream generally furnish a sure and abundant supply; but these are seldom found in the burning desert, where the Oriental shepherd is often compelled to feed his cattle. In such circumstances, happy is he who finds a pool where his flocks may quench their thirst. Often, as he pursues his journey, a broad expanse of water, clear as crystal, seems to open to his view, and, faint and weary under the fierce sunbeam, he gazes on the unexpected relief with ineffable delight, and fondly anticipates a speedy termination to his present distress. He sees the foremost camels enter the lake, and the water dashed about by their feet. He quickens his pace, and hastens to the spot; but to his utter disappointment the vision disappears, and nothing remains but the dry and thirsty wilderness. To such deceitful appearances the Prophet opposes, with admirable effect, the real pool, the overflowing fountain, and the running stream; the appropriate symbols of those substantial blessings of grace and mercy that were laid up in store for the Church of Christ in the last days: "And the parched ground (or the scorching heat) shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water."[c]

19, 20 (19) cedar,[a] 2 Sa. ii. 2—7. shittah tree, acacia, Ex. xxv. 5. myrtle, Ne. viii. 15. oil tree, or wild olive. fir tree, or cypress. pine, or plane (elm). box tree, or *sherbin*, a tall cedar.[b] (20) created it, *i.e.* formed, planned, and wrought it out.

God in nature.—The Hebrews had no notion of what we denominate "secondary laws," but believed that God acted directly upon matter, and was the immediate, efficient cause of the solemn order and the varied and wonderful phenomena of nature. Dispensing thus with the whole machinery of cause and effect, as we employ those terms in philosophical language, their minds were brought into immediate contact with God in His manifold works, and this gave, both to devotion and the spirit of poetry, the liveliest inspiration and the freest scope of action. Heaven and earth were governed by His commands; the thunder was His "voice;" the lightning His "arrows." It is He who "causeth the vapour to ascend from the ends of the earth." When the famished city should call upon the corn, the wine, and the oil, and those should call upon the earth for nourishment, and the parched earth should call upon the heavens for moisture, and the heavens should call upon the Lord for permission to refresh the earth, then Jehovah would hear and

does not hold us up, we shall faint, and fail utterly.

c Dr. Thomson.

a "On the march of the suffering exiles through the desert between Babylon and the Holy Land; in the promised and approaching return of the Jews to their country. In these regions water is almost the first object of a man's thoughts. God promises His people to provide water in the wilderness and on the bare highlands for them, and verdure in the desert, that their return may be made easier." —*Mat. Arnold.*

b Is. xxx. 25, xxxv. 7.

v. 17. *S. Lavington*, iii. 415.

c Paxton.

a "The main idea of this *v.* is that of trees growing where they never grew before." — *J. A. Alexander.*

"These trees are all fragrant and durable." — *Spk. Com.*

b Gesenius.

"With God time is not. Unto Him all is present eternity. Worlds, beings, years, with all their natures, powers, and events, — the range whereof, when making, He ordains, — unfold themselves like flowers. He

foresees not, but sees all at once." —*Bailey.*

c Hibbard.

supply. He gave the rain, and He sent the drought and famine. The clouds were not looked upon merely as sustained by a law of specific gravity, but God spread them out in the sky; these clouds were God's chariot, the curtains of His pavilion, the dust of His feet. Snow and hail were fearful manifestations of God, often sent as the messengers of His wrath.[c]

21, 22. (21) **produce,** *etc.*, recalling the challenge of *vv.* 1—5, to produce evidence of their claims to divinity. **strong reasons,** forcible arguments and proofs. (22) **what shall happen,** putting their heathen oracles over against Jehovah's predictions.[a] **consider them,** so as to see if oracle and event have matched.

a "The proof to which they are challenged is Divine foreknowledge. It is placed at their option either to adduce prophecies uttered by them in ancient times, that they might be compared with the events to which they referred; or distinctly to announce some future contingent events." — *Henderson.*

The voice of nature.—Standing at Chamounix before the snow-crowned monarch of the hills, a poet breaks the awful silence thus :—

> Ye ice-falls! Ye that from the mountains' brow
> Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
> Torrents, methinks, that heard an awful voice
> And stopped at once, amidst their maddest plunge.
> Motionless torrents! Silent cataracts,
> Who made you glorious as the gates of Heaven
> Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
> Clothe ye with rainbows? Who with living flowers
> Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?
> God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations
> Answer, and let the ice-plains echo God!
> God! sing, ye meadow streams, with gladsome voice.
> Ye pine groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
> And they too have a voice, ye piles of snow,
> And in their perilous fall shall thunder God

Is. xliii. 9.

b Coleridge.

23—25. (23) **do good,** *etc.*, *i.e.* work some miracle. **dismayed,** at the signs of Divine power these heathen gods put forth. (24) **of nothing,** worse than nothing in your miserable helplessness. **of nought,** marg. *than of a viper.* **abomination,** De. vii. 26. (25) **north,** the Median empire, wh. lay to the north of Babylonia.[a] **rising of the sun,** *i.e.* the east. Persia lay eastward of Babylonia.[b] **princes,** prefects or deputies.

a Je. l. 3, 9.

b "Cyrus combined in himself two nationalities; his mother being a Mede, his father a Persian."—*Spk. Com.*

Omnipresence of God.—To the Hebrews, the external universe is just a black screen concealing God. All things are full of, yet all distinct from, Him. The cloud on the mountain is His covering; the muttering from the chambers of thunder is His voice; that sound on the top of the mulberry trees is His "going;" in that wind, which bends the forest or curls the clouds, He is walking; that sun is His still commanding eye. Whither can they go from His spirit? Whither can they flee from His presence? At every step and in every circumstance they feel themselves God-enclosed, God-filled, God-breathing men with a spiritual presence lowering or smiling on them from the sky, sounding in wild tempest, or creeping in panic stillness across the surface of the earth: and if they turn within, lo! it is there also—an "eye" hung in the central darkness of their own hearts. Hence the muse of the Hebrew bard is not Dame Memory, nor any of her syren daughters, but the Almighty, all-

v. 23. *W. Berriman, i. 1.*

"In a spiritual sense all the enemies of God's Church are given as a ransom for her; that is, they are used by God as instruments for her deliverance."—*S. Cyril.*

"How did the atheist get his idea of that God whom he denies?"—*Coleridge.*

s Gilfillan.

pervading Spirit Himself, who is at once the subject, the auditor, and the inspirer of the song.[c]

26—29. (26) **who,** *etc.*, "who of the false gods can point to warnings and prophecies fulfilled, as the God of Israel can? What have they to produce like the Lord's sentence passed two hundred years ago on Assyria in its pride of power (Isaiah x. 12)."[a] (27) **the first,** better, *beforehand is it said to Zion.* Jehovah first announced by His Prophet the approach of the conqueror; before any other god or prophet. (28) **no man,** to respond to the foregoing challenge. (29) **nothing,** pure fiction and imposture. **wind,** *etc.*, unsubstantial and fruitless. **confusion,** emptiness.[b]

Existence of God.—Basil called the world a school wherein reasonable souls are taught the knowledge of God. In a musical instrument, when we observe divers strings meet in harmony, we conclude that some skilful musician tuned them. When we see thousands of men in a field, marshalled under several colours, all yielding exact obedience, we infer that there is a general whose commands they are all subject to. In a watch, when we take notice of great and small wheels all so fitted as to concur to an orderly motion, we acknowledge the skill of an artificer. When we come into a printing house, and see a great number of different letters so ordered as to make a book, the consideration hereof maketh it evident that there is a composer, by whose art they were brought into such a frame. When we behold a fair building, we conclude it had an architect; a stately ship, well-rigged, and safely conducted to the port, that it hath a pilot. So here. The visible world is such an instrument, army, watch, book, building, ship, as undeniably argueth a God, who was and is the tuner, general, and artificer, the composer, architect, and pilot of it.[c]

a Mat. Arnold.

b Barnes.

"This is the summary conclusion of the whole preceding controversy as to the divinity of any gods except Jehovah."—*J. A. Alexander.*

"He who can enter a church, or a chapel, or any place dedicated to the worship of God, as he does his own habitation, or that of his horses, which is a common case, has, in my opinion, no proper notion of religious worship, and is never likely to derive much edification to his own soul from attendance upon the ordinance of God."—*Dr. A. Clarke.*

c Arrowsmith.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SECOND.

1. my servant, this term has been applied both to Israel and to Cyrus; here it is applied to the Messiah.[a] **elect,** specially chosen and called.[b] **spirit upon him,** Is. xi. 2, lxi. 1. **bring forth,** or cause judgment to go forth.[c]

The character of the Messiah (*v.* 1).—I. The person here designated—not Cyrus, or the Jewish people, or Isaiah, but Christ. II. For what office was He set apart? III. How He discharged this office. 1. Without violence; 2. He loved secrecy; 3. With great sympathy with men; 4. With truth and fidelity.[d]

The suffering God.—Sometimes we are met by those who have been trained to believe that God should not suffer; that there is a gross injustice in the conception of a God suffering what He Himself does not deserve; and that the idea that the Creator of the universe suffered for mankind is inconsistent with the principle of reason and conscience. I know not what may be the principle of reason or conscience: but in the suffering of God for His creatures there is no violation of that great law of love on which a Divine government is established, and which is represented by fatherhood among men. For I hold that the doctrine of vicarious suffering, of the chastisement of our peace being laid on the Lord Jesus Christ, of our being healed with His

a The Jewish writer *Abarbanel* says that they who do not interpret this of Messiah are smitten with blindness.

"The law of prophetic suggestion leads Isaiah fr. Cyrus to the far greater Deliverer, behind whom the former is lost sight of."—*Fausset.*

Mat. xii. 18–20.

b 2 Sa. xxi. 6; Ps. cvi. 23.

c "His righteous government, wh had hitherto been displayed chiefly inside Israel, shall

now go forth to the long-oppressed nations." —*Spk. Com.*

v. 1. *J. Welch*, 320.

vv. 1–3. *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kys.* 286.

vv. 1–25. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iii. 206.

d J. Wolfendale.

e H. W. Beecher.

a "God's servant shall bring to men's hearts the word of God's righteousness and salvation by a gentle, inward, and spiritual method." — *Mat. Arnold.*

b Is. lxi. 1—3; Mat. xi. 28—30.

c "The wick of a candle newly lighted, which is ready to go out again." — *Mat. Henry.*

d "The main idea seems to be that the end in question is to be accomplished not by clamour, not by violence, but by the truth."— *J. A. Alexander.*

v. 2. *W. Strong*, 637.

v. 3. *J. Welch*, 418; *J. Payne*, 161; *J. Maltham*, 219; *J. Grose*, iv. 183; *W. Eldridge*, 46; *F. Elwin*, i. 123; *E. Bather*, iii. 172; *H. E. Manning*, ii. 377; *R. A. Suckling*, 196.

e Stems and Twigs.

f Roberts.

g Pres. Davies.

g Je. xxiii. 5.

"Mild and gentle as he would be towards the stripes, of His standing for us that we might be saved—I hold that that doctrine was foretold, not alone by prophets, but by parents. And every parent that has attempted to bring his child up according to the Christian standard has been a prophet of God preaching the great truth of one suffering for another. And when you go back to the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, you go not to a strange and new doctrine; you go not to something that violates reason; you go to a larger view, you go to sublimer aspects, you go to higher relationships. For, after all, in the fatherhood experience, in the family experience on earth, there is enough that is like Christ to interpret the love-element in Him, and to make every man feel, "Here is the blossoming of the tree of life, the germs of which we see in the household."*e*

2, 3. (2) **cry,** *lit.* not clamour.*a* "He shall not speak with the high, vehement voice of men who contend." "His work shall be carried on unobtrusively."*b* (3) **bruised reed,** a striking symbol of weakness. A reed that is bruised is so easily broken. **smoking flax, or a dim wick.***c* **unto truth,** *i.e.* either by means of truth, or for a permanency; intimating that the new dispensation under the Messiah should be a lasting one.*d*

The song of the reed to the bruised (*v.* 3).—The Shepherd does not break His reed, for—I. He remembers its former services. II. He remembers there is a paucity of such reeds. III. He knows the possibility of the reed being rectified. IV. He prizes it because He fashioned it. 1. He chose it; 2. It cost Him very much; 3. He bruised the reed. Apply:—(1) Let us recognise the fitness of the metaphor; (2) Believe the declaration; (3) Believe much more.*e*

Note on v. 2.—When two or more people go along the streets, they speak in such a loud voice that all who pass may hear. Has a person gained or lost a cause in a court of justice, he vociferates his story again and again to his companions, as he goes along the road. This practice may have arisen from the custom of the superior walking the first, which makes it necessary for him to speak in a loud voice, that those who are in the rear may hear his observations. Men of a boisterous temper, who wish to raise a clamour, or those who are leaders in any exploit, always bawl aloud when they talk to their companions, as they go along the road.*f*—*Note on v.* 3.—Perhaps this imagery may be derived from the practice of the ancient shepherds, who were wont to amuse themselves with the music of a pipe of reed or straw; and when it was bruised they broke it, or threw it away as useless. But the bruised reed shall not be broken by this Divine Shepherd of souls. The music of broken sighs and groans is indeed all that the broken reed can afford Him; the notes are but low, melancholy, and jarring; and yet He will not break the instrument, but He will repair and tune it: till it is fit to join in the concert of angels on high; and even now its humble strains are pleasing to His ears. Surely, every broken heart must revive while contemplating this tender and moving imagery.*g*

4. fail, *etc.*, the servant is here regarded as if he were the lamp and reed, and the words mean. "He shall not be dim nor crushed." **set judgment,** or fully established the true religion.*a* **his law,** specially regarded as a revelation of duty.*b*

Preaching of Christ.—Our Lord found many a topic of discourse in the scenes around Him. Even the humblest objects shine in His hands as I have seen a fragment of broken glass or earthenware, as it caught the sunbeam, light up, flashing like a diamond. With the stone of Jacob's well for a pulpit, and its water for a text, He preached salvation to the Samaritan woman. A little child, which He takes from its mother's side, and holds up blushing in His arms before the astonished audience, is the text for a sermon on humility. A husbandman on a neighbouring height, between Him and the sky, who strides with long and measured steps over the field he sows, supplies a text from which He discourses on the Gospel and its effects on different classes of hearers. In a woman baking; in two women who sit by some cottage door grinding at the mill; in an old, strong fortalice, perched on a rock, whence it looks across the brawling torrent to the ruined and roofless gable of a house swept away by mountain floods—Jesus found texts. From the birds that sung above His head, and the lilies that blossomed at His feet, He discoursed on the care of God—these His text, and providence His theme.[c]

broken - hearted and desponding, no power should depress his spirit, impede his progress, obscure his glory, or thwart his purpose."—*Henderson.*

b Ps. xxii. 27.

v. 4. *Dr. J. Duprè*, ii. 102; *Hon. G. T. Noel*, i. 177.

"God writes the Gospel not in the Bible only, but on the trees and flowers and clouds and stars."—*Luther.*

c Dr. Guthrie.

5—7. (5) saith God, to His servant, Messiah. spread . . earth,[a] Ps. cxxxvi. 6. people, *i.e.* the whole human race. (6) in righteousness, or, in the carrying out of My righteous plan. covenant, or a mediator.[b] (7) open, *etc.*, Is. lxi. 1; Lu. iv. 18; He. ii. 14, 15.

Christ a salvation.—Having Christ, we have salvation also; while, without receiving Christ Himself, we cannot have the salvation. Having the fountain, we have its issuing streams. Cut off from the fountain, the streams will not flow to us. Christ offers Himself to be the Bridegroom of the soul. He offers to endow His bride with all the riches of His own inheritance in the heirship of His Father. Taking Him as our Bridegroom, and giving ourselves to Him as the bride espouses her husband, with Him we have all He has as well as all He is; while without Him we can have neither. The mistake is that of seeking the salvation instead of seeking the Saviour; just the same mistake that the affianced would make if she should seek to have the possessions of him to whom she was engaged made over to her from him without their union in wedlock, instead of accepting his offer of himself, and having the hymeneal bond completed, by which he and all he has would become hers.[c]

a "This clause is not a scientific but a poetical description. To the eye the heavens have the appearance of a canopy or curtain, and the verdant surface of the earth that of a carpet."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Is. xlix. 8.

v. 6. *R. Robinson*, ii. 206; *R. Erskine*, i. 174; *Dr. T. Crisp*, i. 124.

c Boardman.

8. the Lord, *i.e.* Jehovah; "God's distinguishing and incommunicable name."[a] "The self-existent and immutable." glory . . another, *i.e.* He will not share it with any.[b] graven images, put for idols in general, with special reference to the mode of their formation, by the hands of mere workmen.

Idolatry.—A lady, who lived some years at Serampore, in India, thus writes in a letter: "One evening, as I was walking with my husband by the river-side, we saw two respectable natives carrying a woman in their arms. We asked them what they were going to do with her. They very coldly answered, 'We are going to put her into the river, that her soul may go to heaven, for she is our mother!' I asked them if she was ill. They said, 'She is not very ill, but she is old, and has no teeth, and what is the use of her living?' I felt a great deal on hearing this, and

a Ex. vi. 3; Ps. lxxxiii. 18, xcvi. 5; Ho. xii. 5.

b "This text is quoted by the Jews, alleging the unity of the Godhead; and that Divine worship is therefore not to be given to Christ. To which allegation S. Justin Martyr replies, showing from Isaiah him-

self that Christ is God."—*Wordsworth.*

"The true measure of loving God is to love Him without measure."—*St. Bernard.*

c Whitecross.

said, 'What! have you no compassion on your mother? Will you drown her because she is old?' The woman instantly fixed her eyes on me, and said, 'What sort of a woman are you!' I told her I was an Englishwoman, and wished to prevent her children from drowning her, and, if they did, I would acquaint the governor with it, and have them both hanged. They said, 'Never mind;' and proceeded towards the river. My husband then ran down the bank, and, taking hold of the woman, insisted upon their taking her home. They did so; but, sad to tell, they brought her again the next evening, and Mr. Felix Carey saw them throw her into the water, without performing the usual ceremony of giving her water in the name of their gods."[c]

a Comp. Jos. xxi. 45.

b "A botanical metaphor, aptly introduced to show that no appearances existed which gave the least indication of the things predicted. They were, as it were, hid under ground from the sight of mortals."—*Henderson.*

c "In the convulsions of war and change coming upon the earth God's arm was about to be shown in the overthrow of idolatrous Babylon, and in the restoration of His chosen people; hence this song of triumph."—*Mat. Arnold.*
d O. W. Holmes.

9, 10. (9) **former things**, things previously prophesied, which have been fulfilled:[a] such *e.g.* as concerned the Assyrians. **new things**, these wh. Isaiah had been prophesying concerning Cyrus, and the return from captivity. **spring forth**, when only in the germ.[b] (10) **sing**, as the sign of universal joy in the delightful expectation.[c] **down . . sea**, *comp.* Ps. xcvi. 11.

The sea and humanity.—It has been queried whether this statement, "There was no more sea," is to be understood literally, or whether it is only significant of the repose which shall mark the new earth. Between man and the ocean, however, there is little or no sympathy, and he regards the sea in a very different way from that in which he regards mountains, grand and vast as they are. "The sea remembers nothing. The mountains give their lost children berries and water; the sea mocks their thirst and lets them die. The mountains have a grand, stupid, lovable tranquillity; the sea has a fascinating, treacherous intelligence. The mountains lie about like huge ruminants, their broad backs awful to look upon, but safe to handle; the sea smooths its silver scales until you cannot see their joints, but their shining is that of the snake. The mountains may dwarf mankind; the sea seems to drown out humanity and time."[d]

a Is. xxi. 16.

b Is. xvi. 1.

11, 12. (11) **wilderness**, *etc.*, the expanse of desert country bet. Babylonia, Palestine, and Arabia. **Kedar**, an Arabian people, Ge. xxv. 13. Prob. put here for the Arabs generally.[a] **the rock**, of Sela, or Petra, the rock city of Edom.[b] (12) **islands**, as previously, a general term for coasts and countries. The districts here referred to lay *westward*, as the Arab countries lay eastward.

The joyful proclamation (*v.* 11).—I. This proclamation exhibits a glorious object. 1. He is the appointed Saviour; 2. The all-sufficient Saviour; 3. The only possible Saviour. II. This proclamation contains a gracious message. 1. His mysterious advent; 2. His important mission; 3. His glorious recompense. III. This proclamation demands special attention. 1. We should behold Him with—(1) Devout admiration; (2) Believing application; (3) Joyful anticipation.[c]

vv. 11, 12. *Bp. Huntingford*, 427.

c *Eta* in 400 Sks.

13, 14. (13) **man of war**, Ex. xv. 3; Ps. xxiv. 8. **stir up jealousy**,[a] *i.e.* rouse up His indignation to active efforts. **roar**, a figure of speech taken from the shout, or battle-cry, of a warrior. **prevail**, marg. *behave himself mightily.* Perhaps it may mean *prevail over.* (14) **cry . . woman**,[b] intimating a sudden and strong Divine determination. **devour**, or *sup up.*[c]

Note on v. 14.—The words devour, swallow, or sup, as used by

a Better rendered *zeal*, because our associations with the word *jealousy* make it unsuitable as applied to God. If used of God it should be distinctly under-

Isaiah and Habakkuk, evidently allude to the same thing. Jehovah had refrained Himself, but now He was about to come forth and utterly destroy His enemies. When a king wishes to convey an idea that he will completely destroy his foes, he says, I will *mullunga-vain*, *i.e.* "swallow them up." Habakkuk says of the Chaldæans, "Their faces shall sup up, as the east wind." Of a man who has a savage face, it is said, "He has a *mullungera-muggam*, a devouring face." "Look at that fellow's face, you may see he could swallow you." But the Chaldæans are compared to the destructive east wind; and it is a fact, that the same wind is spoken of in similar terms in all parts of the East. Its name is *allikkera-kattu*, *i.e.* the destroying wind, and so sure as it shall blow for any length of time, will vegetation be destroyed. How this is produced is, perhaps, among the inexplicable mysteries of nature. Its destructive qualities on vegetable nature in England are well known, and yet it would appear that not one time in a thousand can it blow in an uninterrupted current from the distant East, because there are always, so far as I have been able to observe, counter currents. Another fact is, that, however far east you may travel, it is still the same wind which brings destruction. The allusion, therefore, in Genesis (and other places), is illustrated by the continued malignity of that wind.[d]

15, 16. (15) **mountains**, *etc.*, as prev., the symbols of governments, such as the Babylonian, wh. hindered His people from their return to their own land. **rivers**, the great rivers of Mesopotamia.[a] (16) **blind**, *etc.*, *i.e.* cause them to witness things of wh. they had no previous experience. **darkness**, *etc.*, figures for overcoming all kinds of difficulty. **these . . them**, better rend., "These are the words (*i.e.* My promises), I have performed them, and have not abandoned them."[b]

The way of the blind (*v.* 16).—God's conduct towards His people gives a striking view—1. Of the state in which they set out in life, spiritually blind; 2. Of the manner in which this blindness is removed; 3. Of the necessary steps that are taken to make this deliverance a blessing indeed; 4. This view of the conduct of Divine grace is crowned with the promise of perseverance, grace, and support to the end of life.[c]

17, 18. (17) **turned back**,[a] by finding their confidences in idols fail them. Driven back in confusion. (18) **deaf . . blind**, some of the Prophet's countrymen, who seemed unable to receive his cheering message.[b] Some apply to idolaters, but *v.* 19 seems to limit the reference to Israel.

Christ a great Saviour.—A female chief, who had become a member of the church, and adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour, sent for the Rev. John Williams when on her death-bed. "I found her lying on a mat," says Mr. Williams, "with the New Testament by her side; and she addressed me thus:—'Come and tell me what I must do; I am about to die.' I said, 'What sins do you allude to? I have known you a long time, and I know of no special sin to produce this painful anxiety in your mind.' She still said, 'Oh, my sins! my sins! I am about to die: I shall meet all those children whom I have destroyed, at the judgment-seat of Christ.' I inquired how many children she had destroyed. She said, 'Sixteen'—for infanticide had prevailed in that island to an awful extent—'Oh! what must I do?' I began to reason

stood to mean, "sensitive regard for His own honour, and for the welfare of His people."

b Ga. iv. 19.

c "Ancient versions—'I will desolate and swallow up at once.' Many moderns—'I will breathe forth and draw in my breath together;' as one who is making a severe effort."—*Spk. Com.*

d Roberts.

a Comp. **Is. xli.** 15—19.

b Jerome.

"Men are born with two eyes but with one tongue, in order that they should see twice as much as they say."—*Colton.*

c T. N. Toller.

a "A description of the disappointment experienced by the idolaters of Babylon when they found that their gods had been unable to protect them from Cyrus."—*Henderson.*

b Comp. Is. xliii. 8; Mat. xv. 14; Mk. iii. 5.

v. 18. *Bp. Abernethy, The Christian*, 486.

"The eyes have a property in things and territories not named in any title-deeds, and are owners of our choicest possessions."—*Alcott.*

c *Whitecross.*

with her, and said, it was done in ignorance, and dwelt upon that passage, 'The times of this ignorance God winked at;' but she still kept exclaiming, 'My children! my children!' and the agony of her mind seemed to increase. I took up the New Testament, and read the text, 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,' not excepting even the chief; and, while she continued exclaiming, 'Oh, my children! my children!' I was employed in pointing to the blood of Christ, which spoke better things than the blood of her murdered children. She at length became more tranquil; and in a few days she died, full of hope that her sins, though many, were forgiven."[c]

19, 20. (19) **who is blind,**[a] *i.e.* why appeal to heathen, when My own people are so blind and deaf! **perfect,** Heb. *meshullam*, he that is God's favoured friend. (20) **seeing . . not,** Is. liii. 1. The Jews had, through long ages, been honoured with special Divine revelations. This expression includes, prophetically, the blindness of Israel to Christ the Great Teacher.[b]

Note on v. 19.—I think we are to understand this as alluding to the agent employed by the Lord, *i.e.* he was so absorbed with his message as to be blind and deaf to all other attractions. When the Yogee affects to deliver a message from the gods, or when he speaks of futurity, he is as one who is blind and deaf; and so insensible is he to external things, that whatever sights may pass before his vision, and whatever sounds may fall upon his ear, he appears to be altogether insensible to their power. The people say he is so full of the deity as to be unconscious of passing scenes.[c]

a "Israel, as a whole, is faint-hearted, is slow to understand God's great purposes for it, and incredulous of them, in spite of all the experience it has had of God's guidance."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b Lu. vii. 23.

c *Roberts.*

21, 22. (21) **is well pleased,** better *was pleased*, to choose Israel for the carrying out of His purposes, and, though now Israel may be despoiled and captive, God will yet fulfil His plan, and magnify His law and purpose.[a] **the law,** pos., here, the message the Prophet delivers;[b] but more prob. the Divine plan and purpose concerning Israel. (22) **robbed,** *etc.*, ch. xvii. 14, descriptive of the sufferings of Israel in exile. **snared,** marg., "in snaring all the young men of them."[c] **spoil,** Heb., *a treading.*[d]

Origin of the commandments.—An infidel of acute mind sought an acquaintance with the truth of the Bible, and began to read at the Book of Genesis. When he had reached the ten commandments, he said to a friend, "I will tell you what I used to think. I supposed that Moses was the leader of a horde of banditti; that, having a strong mind, he acquired great influence over superstitious people; and that on Mount Sinai he played off some sort of fireworks to the amazement of his ignorant followers, who imagined, in their mingled fear and superstition, that the exhibition was supernatural. I have been looking into the nature of that law. I have been trying to see whether I can add anything to it, or take any thing from it, so as to make it better. Sir, I cannot. It is perfect. The first commandment directs us to make the Creator the object of our supreme love and reverence. That is right. If He be our Creator, Preserver, and Supreme Benefactor, we ought to treat Him, and none other, as such. The second forbids idolatry. That certainly is right. The third forbids profanity. The fourth fixes a time for religious worship. If there be a God, He ought surely to be worshipped. It is

a "The people, being thus unfaithful to their trust, had no claim to be treated any longer as an object of Jehovah's favour; and yet He continues propitious, not on their account, but out of regard to His own engagements, and for the execution of His righteous purposes."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b *Nägelsbach.*

Mat. v. 17; Ro. x. 4.

c "Caught by their foes in the caverns in which they found refuge."—*Barnes.*

"Bound in subterranean dungeons."—*Maurer.*

d "Notwithstanding all God's favour to

suitable that there should be an outward homage, significant of our inward regard. If God be worshipped, it is proper that some time should be set apart for that purpose, when all may worship Him harmoniously, and without interruption. One day in seven is certainly not too much, and I do not know that it is too little. The fifth defines the peculiar duties arising from family relations. Injuries to our neighbour are then classified by the moral law. They are divided into offences against life, chastity, property, and character; and I notice that the greatest offence in each class is expressly forbidden. Thus the greatest injury to life is murder; to chastity, adultery: to property, theft; to character, perjury. Now, the greater offence must include the less of the same kind. Murder must include every injury to life; adultery, every injury to purity; and so of the rest. And the moral code is closed and perfected by a command forbidding every improper desire in regard to our neighbours. I have been thinking, Where did Moses get that law? I have read history. The Egyptians and the adjacent nations were idolaters; so were the Greeks and Romans; and the wisest or best Greeks or Romans never gave a code of morals like this. Where did Moses get that law which surpasses the wisdom and philosophy of the most enlightened ages? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous; but he has given a law in which the learning and sagacity of all subsequent time can detect no flaw. Where did he get it? He could not have soared so far above his age as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he obtained it. It came down from heaven. I am convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible." The infidel (infidel no longer) remained to his death a firm believer in the truth of Christianity.

23—25. (23) **give ear**, so as to heed, and change, and receive the Divine message. **time to come**, the after-time, which will be so full of the Lord's power. (24) **the Lord**, the blind people thought it was Babylon that had overthrown Jerusalem; nay, if they could but see, they would find it was Jehovah. (25) **burned him**, in the Divine chastening fires.[a]

Power of law.—There are stronger things in the world than force. There are powers more difficult to overcome than strong or brazen gates. Suppose we found a prisoner condemned to die, and locked up in his cell, and we were to ask ourselves how he could be saved from execution. There would appear great difficulty in getting him out of prison. That iron door, with its great bolt; that high window, with its guard of strong bars; those thick strong walls; those heavy gates outside; that watchful jailer; how impossible it seems to overcome them all. Yet these are not the only difficulties, nor the greatest. There is another thing, stronger than all these, holding the poor prisoner to death. There is the sentence of the law. For, unless he would himself become a criminal, no man dares to help the condemned one out. Get the sentence repealed, and the other difficulties are removed. I will take you in thought to two houses—one is your own, but the doors and windows are all fast, and you have no key; it will be hard to get in. Beside it is another belonging to your neighbour—a house you know you have no right to enter, and have been forbidden to approach: the door is open, and nothing withstands your entrance that you can see. Yet it will be harder to go in there than into your own house, for it would make you a

Israel, Israel is spoiled, and carried captive, and why? Not because of any failure in God's love, but because of their sins; because they are wilfully blind and deaf."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 21. *M. Henry, Wks.*; *E. Erskine*, iii. 189; *J. Maclaurin*, 409; *A. Pirie, Crit.Obs.* iii. "To preach up justification by the law as a covenant, is legal; and makes void the death and merits of Jesus Christ; but to preach obedience to the law, as a rule, is evangelical: and it savours as much of a New Testament spirit, as they phrase it, to urge the commands of the law, as to display the promise of the Gospel."—*Hopkins.*

[a] De. xx. 24–28. v. 24. *W. Fenner*, i. 349; *Dr. G. Fothergill*, i. 307. "If one man bestow upon another house or land, or some such thing, and, in consideration thereof, bindeth him to fulfil many conditions, whereof if he break the least the gift is void; even so we may not marvel when we hear that, by the breaking of one point of one commandment, we fail of perfect righteousness, and are made the heirs of everlasting damnation."—*Cawdray.* "There is mention made of one who willingly fetched water near two miles every day a whole

year together, to pour upon a dry dead stick, at the command of a superior, when no reason could be given for so doing. How ready, then, should every one be to do God service, to be at the command of Jesus Christ, whose commands are backed with reason, and whose precepts are attended with encouragements!"-*Spencer.*

b Dr. Edmond.

trespasser on rights. An armed fortress belonging to an enemy might be destroyed by force, if a general were sent to capture it; but without a warrant, would that general go into the palace of the king? When Eve stood beside the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil, there was no fence around it, keeping her steps aloof; no shield to prevent her hand touching the fruit; yet there was a guard more powerful than walls to keep her from plucking it, till she resolved to sin. The words,—Thou shalt not eat of it,—so long as her heart was right with God, were like a rampart of fire around that forbidden tree. If a father had said to a dutiful child, There is an object you must not handle, it is more truly out of the child's reach than if he had merely placed it high up where the little hand could not get hold of it.[b]

CHAPTER THE FORTY-THIRD.

1. **created thee,** *i.e.* as a nation. **redeemed thee,**[a] with prob. allusion to the deliverance from Egypt. **called . . name,** "giving thee a definite call to a specific work."[b] **mine,** *i.e.* wholly separated to the carrying out of My purposes.

God's care for His people (*v.* 1).—I. What is here supposed respecting the people of God. II. What is here promised to them. III. The ground on which the promise is made. Infer—1. What consolation does the Gospel of Christ afford; 2. How needful for us is it that we obtain an interest in Christ.[c]

Have faith in God.—A poor widow was weeping in the room where lay the body of her husband. Their only child came in and said, "Why do you weep so, mother?" The mother told him of their loss, and especially referred to their poverty. "The poorhouse will receive us." Looking into her face the little fellow said, "Is God dead, mother?"[d]

2. **water . . fire,**[a] Ps. lxvi. 12: figures for the oppressive and overwhelming empires of the world. Water and fire are the two natural forces that can get ruinously beyond human control.

Support and protection in the day of trial (*v.* 2).—I. The people to whom these promises were addressed. II. The condition of that people as supposed in the text. III. The promises made to God's people in that condition.[b]

In floods and flames.—The night before his execution, the martyr, Thomas Bilney, being composed and even cheerful, dwelt much on this among other passages of Scripture: "Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." It was not that he expected any other than mental support, or superstitiously anticipated exemption from pain: but "a pain for time," says he, "whereon, notwithstanding, followeth joy unspeakable." The copy of the Latin Bible once belonging to him is still in existence, and belongs to one of the libraries at Cambridge. There are many annotations on its pages in his own hand; and this passage of Isaiah, which shed its light in the recesses of his dungeon, was specially marked with a pen on the margin. Did the flames

a "The Hebrew word means, 'To ransom by a price paid in lieu of the captive.' See *c.* 3."—*Fausset.*

b "To call by name includes the ideas of specific designation, public announcement, and solemn consecration to a certain work."—*J. A. Alexander.*

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d R. T. S.

a "The mighty power of Assyria, to which the Prophet refers in the next verse, has been already compared to a great flood of water, threatening to overwhelm everything. Is. xvii. 12."-*Wordsworth.*

b E. Edwards.

"Images of the greatest troubles and dangers, and promises of perfect security."—*Henderson.*

Ps. xxiii. 4, xci. 5–7; Da. iii. 23, 25.

v. 2. *Dr. J. Peddie,* 395; *M. Jackson,* i. 246.

kindle upon that martyr's inner man? Do the floods overwhelm any trusting soul? True, Providence constructs very few natural bridges along the believer's path; but whoever walks with God will find this promise, "The rivers shall not overflow thee," fulfilled. Our heavenly Father gathers up the trusting child in His arms, and bears him safely over. He is evermore teaching lessons of confidence and submission. "My first convictions on the subject of religion," says the Rev. Richard Cecil, "were confirmed by observing that really religious persons had some solid happiness among them which I felt the vanities of the world could not give. I shall never forget standing by the bedside of my sick mother. 'Are you not afraid to die?' I asked. 'No.' 'No! Why does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern?' 'Because God has said, Fear not: when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'"

3, 4. (3) **gave Egypt**, *etc.*, "In the crash now begun, the new conquering power, Persia, was about to attack and overturn other powers besides Babylon. Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, conquered Egypt, and invaded Ethiopia.[a] **Seba**, or Saba, *i.e.* Meröe on the Upper Nile.[b] (4) **since**, from the time that. **men for thee**, as the price of thy recovery fr. the Babylonish captivity. Cyrus's success with other nations helped to make him act graciously toward the Jews.

The Lord's delight in His people (*v.* 4).—The Lord will adorn the soul that He loves, hence we may discover who are the chosen people of God. When the Lord takes a sinner out of the world He will adorn that soul. He casts over him the robe of rightcousness.[c]

Trust in God.—

The child leans on its parent's breast,
Leaves there its cares, and is at rest;
The bird sits singing by his nest,
And tells aloud
His trust in God, and is blest
'Neath every cloud.

He has no store, he sows no seed;
Yet sings aloud, and doth not heed;
By flowing stream, or grassy mead
He sings to shame
Men who forget, in fear of need,
A Father's name.

The heart that trusts for ever sings,
And feels as light as it had wings;
A well of peace within it springs;
Come good or ill,
Whate'er to-day, to-morrow brings,
It is His will![d]

5—7. (5) **east**, *etc.*,[a] at the destruction of Jerus., and during the captivity, God's people had become scattered into all lands, so they were to be restored not from Babylon only. The "seed" is mentioned bec. in *v.* 1 Jacob is addressed, as representative of the nation. (6) **ends . . earth**, none being too far away to be beyond the Divine reach. (7) **created**, as a member of My special kingdom.

On catching the first sight of the Mamelukes drawn up in order of battle on the banks of the Nile, in view of the Pyramids. Bonaparte, riding before the ranks, cried, "Soldiers! from the summits of yonder Pyramids, forty generations are watching you."

a Mal. Arnold. Est. i. 1.

b "The worship of Ammon and Osiris was here celebrated in the most sumptuous manner."—*Henderson.*

c R. Cecil. "'I am God all-sufficient,' said the Lord to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 1). Meditate upon this. He is sufficient for Himself, and for all others. Like His emblem, the sun, He has a fulness of light in Himself. And yet, with regard to the sun, were a thousand millions more creatures to crowd the earth, not one of them should want light and heat; and were a thousand more earths placed in the sweep of space, there are light and vitality sufficient for them all. The same remark applies to God."—*R. Watson.*

d I. Williams.

a "This promise, which had an initial fulfilment in the return fr. Babylon, and a larger one in the gathering in of Gentile converts, looks on yet

further to the final recovery of Israel."—*Spk.Com.*

b W. W. Whythe.

A negro preacher once said, "Brethren, what eber de good God tell me to do in dis blessed book, dat I m gwine to do. If I see in it that I must jump troo a s'one wall, I'm gwine to jump at it. Goin' troo it belongs to God —jumpin' at it 'longs to me."

c Cunningham.

Never fear (*v.* 5).—I. The exhortation. 1. Fear not anxieties; 2. Fear not want; 3. Enemies; 4. Duties; 5. Perils; 6. Death. II. The promise. 1. I am with thee to aid thee; 2. To comfort thee; 3. To guide thee; 4. Protect thee.[b]

God's fatherly care.—

The insect that with puny wing
Just shoots along one summer ray,
The flow'ret which the breath of spring
Wakes into life for half a day,
The smallest mote, the tenderest hair,
All feel our heavenly Father's care.

E'en from the glories of His throne
He bends to view this earthly ball;
Sees all as if that all were one,
Loves one as if that one were all;
Rolls the swift planets in their spheres,
And counts the sinner's lonely tears.[c]

8, 9. (8) **blind . . eyes,** *i.e.* the Jews.[a] (9) **who . . things,** Is. xli. 21. **or let,** *etc.*, if they cannot plead, let them quietly listen to Me.

Love of God.—History's noblest deed and record of love is in the self-devotion of one generous heathen, Pylades, who forfeited his life to save his friend; but "God commendeth His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!" "You have not yet seen," says a great writer and profound thinker, "the greatest gift of all—the heart of God,—the love of His heart—the heart of His love. And will He, in very deed, show us that? Yes, unveil that cross, and see. It was His only mode of showing us His heart. It is infinite love labouring to reveal itself—agonising to utter the fulness of infinite love. Apart from that act, a boundless ocean of love would have remained for ever shut up and concealed in the heart of God. But now it has found an ocean-channel. Beyond this He cannot go. Once and for ever the proof has been given—'God is love.'"[b]

10, 11. (10) **my witnesses,** Israel could abundantly testify to the Divine faithfulness and goodness.[a] **no God formed,** *marg.* "nothing formed of God." (11) **beside me,** excluding all idol-pretensions.[b]

God's witnesses (*v.* 10).—I. Some of the principal things which believers are called to witness for God. 1. To His being and glorious perfections; 2. To the equity of His holy law; 3. To the excellence of His Gospel; 4. To the power of His grace; 5. To the influence of His truth; 6. To the use of His ordinances; 7. To the attention of His providence; 8. To the fulfilment of His promises; 9. To the glorious nature of His rest. II. Describe the character and qualification of God's witnesses. They are called, chosen, impartial, experimental, practical, tried, sworn, many, continued, continual, living, dying. They are competent, credible, unanswerable, and at the last day they will be convincing or condemning witnesses.[c]—*Witnesses* (*v.* 10).—I. Why has God chosen a believer for this work? 1. Because He knows experimentally more of God than any other being: 2. He can have no greater joy: 3. He is constantly in the presence of His fellow-men. II. The things a believer must possess in order to witness for Christ. 1. Knowledge; 2. Veracity; 3. Consistency;

a "Set free My people Israel, who have been blind to My ways but shall see them, and deaf to My word but shall hearken to it."—*Mat. Arnold.*

vv. 8—10. *Dr. R. Hawker*, ix. 705.

v. 9. *H. Kett, Bamp. Lec.* 155; *Dr. A. M'Caul, Warb. Lec.* 1.

b Macduff.

a "The Jews are a kind of standing miracle; being a monument of the wonderful fulfilment of the most extraordinary prophecies ever delivered, which prophecies they themselves preserve, and bear witness to, though they shut their eyes to the fulfilment of them."—*Whately.*

b Is. xlv. 21.

vv. 10, 11. *J. N. Scott*, ii. 92.

v. 11. *T. Gregory*, 265.

c Dr. Ryland.

4. Patience; 5. Boldness. III. The best methods Christ's witnesses can adopt. 1. Continual heart-loyalty to Christ; 2. Resting on His promises; 3. Growing in His likeness; 4. Display of the graces of His spirit.[d]

12, 13. (12) I, emphatic; I Myself, and I alone. God is both the foreteller and the giver of salvation. (13) before the day, even the first day of creation. work, "Jehovah is not only the Immutable, but also the Omnipotent and Irresistible."[a] let it, hinder it; turn it back.

Existence of God.—Basil called the world a school, wherein reasonable souls are taught the knowledge of God. In a musical instrument, when we observe divers strings meet in harmony, we conclude that some skilful musician tuned them. When we see thousands of men in a field, marshalled under several colours, all yielding exact obedience, we infer that there is a general, whose commands they are all subject to. In a watch, when we take notice of great and small wheels, all so fitted as to concur to an orderly motion, we acknowledge the skill of an artificer. When we come into a printing-house, and see a great number of different letters so ordered as to make a book, the consideration hereof maketh it evident that there is a composer, by whose art they were brought into such a frame. When we behold a fair building, we conclude it had an architect; a stately ship, well rigged, and safely conducted to the port, that it hath a pilot. So here: the visible world is such an instrument, army, watch, book, building, ship, as undeniably argueth a God, who was and is the tuner, general, and artificer, the composer, architect, and pilot of it.[b]

14, 15. (14) I have sent, Cyrus, as My messenger. nobles, Heb. *bars, bolts;* figuratively, protectors, defenders. Chaldæans, the proudest part of the nation. cry . . ships, or fleeing away in the ships of their joy,[a] contrasting their joyous cry with their panic cry when compelled to flee. (15) your king, Ps. lxxiv. 12, lxxxix. 18.

Greatness of God.—When the French Government took steps to adorn the Academy of Design in Paris, they gave to Delaroche the painting of that picture which has now become world-renowned, called "The Hemicycle," in which, in some seventy or eighty figures, he grouped around an imaginary art-tribunal all the great architects, sculptors, engravers, and painters both of the ancient and modern world. Now imagine a larger court than this, and that in some vast area you had gathered together all the great souls that have adorned human life, and made the world rich, from the beginning—all great thinkers, all great legislators, commencing with the greatest, Moses; all great poets, who stand next to legislators as ordainers of the people's life: all great diplomatists: all great philosophers; all men who have had a deep insight into nature; all men of great bounty, and benevolence, and liberality: all men of princely wealth; all men eminent as artists; all noted scholars: all men of every age and class who have risen so high that their names have come down to us in history.—imagine that you had gathered together such an assembly of men, and that each one was full of exquisite consciousness and susceptibility as regards the specialty in which he excelled, so that Michael Angelo had a full consciousness of

d Stems and Twigs.

a Henderson.
Da iv. 35.
v. 12. *R. Erskine,* viii. 84.
"For men to judge of their condition by the decrees of God which are hid from us, and not by His Word, which is near us and in our hearts, is as if a man, wandering in a wide sea in a dark night, when the heaven is all clouded about, should yet resolve to steer his course by the stars which he cannot see, but only guess at, and neglect the compass which is at hand, and would afford him a much better and more certain direction."—*Tillotson.*
b Arrowsmith.

a "I make the Chaldæans to flee upon the barks that had before served for their pleasure.' The great feature of Babylon was its rivers, the Euphrates, with its quays, cuts, and artificial lakes; it served alike for use and for pleasure."—*Mat. Arnold.*
"If you were cast out of your country a thousand miles off, you are not out of God's precinct: His arm is there to cherish the good, as well as to drag out the wicked. It is the same God, the same presence, in every country, as well as the same sun, moon, and stars; and were not God

everywhere, yet He would not be meaner than His creature, the sun in the firmament, which visits every part of the habitable world in twenty-four hours."—*Charnock.*

"We cannot tell how far is the nearest fixed star, and we know that the mass of mankind would conjecture it a few miles at most; could we approach nearer, we would, for the first time, learn how far we were! Surely it is so with our religious estimates of approximation to the light and glory of God; the earth-born crowd afar, if they think at all of the matter, never dream themselves so darkly, so remotely exiled; it is only he who struggles nearer and much nearer, that begins at length to perceive the true amount of the distance."—*Archer Butler.*

b H. W. Beecher.

all those wonderful combinations which populated his mind; so that Raphael had a full consciousness of all those sweet and exquisite conceptions which presented themselves to his interior vision; so that all that Murillo saw, and all that Claude fancied, and all that every other artist who had become eminent had ever conceived, should stand forth in them with exquisite, living sensibility, and then bring down from the highest point of heaven this Christ, and let Him stand in the midst, and let one after another speak to Him, each of the thing which is most to him; and, one by one, as they speak to Him, let them find that all of thought which they possess is His thought, that all of conception which they have is His conception, that all of sensibility and taste which they are conscious belong to their being are His sensibility and taste; let them find that He is familiar with everything in which they have stood pre-eminent; let the poet find that, as compared with Christ, he is but a prattling child; let the sculptor find that, as compared with Christ, he is but an unbegun artist; let the orator find that his words, in comparison with those of Christ, fall paralysed upon his lips, and they would, every one of them, bow before Him, and say, "Never man spake like this Man." The architect, the sculptor, the poet, the orator, the philosopher, the scientist—every man in his own speciality; he that has ransacked the world in the line of beauty; he that has explored nature in the range of colours; they who have produced works of art that have challenged the admiration of the world; they who have moved masses with their eloquence; they who have soared anywhither in the fields of knowledge, or science, or art—these would each say, instantly, "I am but a spark, and here is the great and glowing soul out of which I flew as a mere spark." They would cry, "Were all of us gathered and tempered into one great nature, melted into one living being, we should still be less than nothing in the presence of this majesty of excellence, that includes everything in heaven, and all that can be on earth, and out of whom sprang everything that is, and everything that has been." The universal acknowledgment to Him would be, "In Thee we live, and move, and have our being."[b]

16—19. (16) **way in the sea,** Ex. xiv. 16, 22; Jos. iii. 13, 16. (17) **chariot,** *etc.*, in allusion to the destruction of Pharaoh's army. (18) **former things,** *see* Is. xlii. 9. (19) **way . . desert,** for the return of Israel from Babylonia to Palestine.[a]

Note on v. 19.—From Lattakoo to Kurree-chane, which is about three hundred miles, might, when I travelled it, be justly called a wilderness, for there was not a single mile of any visible path or road. The ruts made by the wheels of my wagons on going up the country were so visible, that on returning I was delighted to find natives travelling with loaded oxen along those ruts: and as other natives would probably do the same, it would soon become a beaten visible highway, which most likely was the manner of the formation of all original roads. A visible road in a wilderness saves much trouble and anxiety to travellers, even when they have travelled over the same ground before. In general they must be guided by landmarks, such as hills, clumps of trees, fords, etc.: but in plains or across forests, where no hills can be seen, they must often be puzzled what course to follow. But where there is a visible path, however bad, travellers are

a "The circumstances connected with the return should be altogether novel in their character. To indicate that every provision for comfort and security would be made, the boldest poetical images are employed."—*Henderson.*

Je. xxiii. 7.

"Providence has given us all things for our advantage near at hand, but iron, gold, and silver,

relieved from all this trouble, anxiety, and uncertainty, as if they constantly heard a voice behind them saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." In a heathen land the inhabitants are ignorant of the way to true happiness either here or hereafter; but when Gospel light enters, publishing what the Son of God has done and suffered for sinners, then a highway may be said to be in that land, which, by the blessing of God, will greatly increase the comfort of the population.[b]

being both the instruments of slaughter and the price of it, nature has hidden in the bowels of the earth."—*Seneca.*

b Campbell.

20, 21. (20) **dragons,** Ps. xci. 13. **owls,** better, *ostriches.* (21) **this people,** or My people Israel. The idea seems to be that by providing water in the desert for His returning people, even the wild beasts shall profit, and this again shall excite His people's praise.

Owls and dragons (*v.* 20).—I. Here is a blessed change expressed. 1. The previous state of the region itself; 2. Some think favourably of such a state; 3. The change itself caused by waters, etc. (1) The value of these supplies; (2) Their fulness. II. The agency ascribed to metaphorical beings. 1. Owls: many men dislike sunshine, search for food in the shadow; 2. Dragons: Satan the old dragon, his servants like him; 3. The acts ascribed to them. They honour God. (1) Passively; (2) Actively.[a]

v. 21. *E. W. Whitaker,* i. 77; *Dr. H. Draper,* iii. 63.

"We are not to lead events, but to follow them."—*Epictetus.*

a W. Jay.

22—24. (22) **not called,** by prayer and penitential supplication. **weary,** of waiting *for* Me, but not of waiting *on* Me. Or, you have looked on My service as a wearying burden and hardship. (23) **small cattle,** or lambs, Ps. l. 8. Offering of sacrifice publicly had ceased during the captivity, but it seems that private sacrifice had ceased also. **caused . . serve,** laid no servile task on thee. (24) **sweet cane,** *Calamus aromaticus,* Je. vi. 20.[a] **wearied me,** Is. vii. 13; Mal. ii. 17.

Weary of God (*v.* 22).—I. The nature of this evil. II. Its manifestations. III. Its occasion. IV. Its causes. V. Its bitter fruits. VI. Its prevention. VII. Its cure.[b]

Note on v. 24.—On approaching and entering first the city of Mashow, and afterward that of Kurree-chane, the two highest up towns which I visited in Africa, various of the inhabitants, who, like all the rest of their countrymen, had never seen wagons or white men before, were charmed with the sight, and, as a proof of it, they presented me with pieces of sugar or sweet cane, about a foot in length, and in such numbers, that the bottom of that part of the wagon where I sat was covered with sweet cane. It was an act of kindness. This occurrence explained to me this passage in Isaiah, where God is evidently charging His ancient people with want of affection, or unkindness: which expression they would understand, having probably the same custom which I found in Africa, which the Hebrews may have learned while they resided in Africa, viz., in Egypt.[c]

a An ingredient of the holy anointing oil (Ex. xxx. 23). It is mentioned with cinnamon. *v.* 22. *T. Manton,* iii. part ii. 1.

b S. Martin.

"Dr. Boothroyd has 'sweet reed.' Tamal, 'sweet bark!' This probably means cinnamon, as we know that 'sweet bark' was used by Moses in the service of the sanctuary: and it is in connection with the sacrifices of the Most High that it is here mentioned by the Prophet."—*Roberts.*

c Campbell.

25, 26. (25) **blotteth,** *etc.,* Ps. li. 9. Figure for erasing from public records the charge of crime. **mine own sake,** "from motives derived purely from My own nature, uninfluenced by any cause in you."[a] (26) **us plead together,**[b] *i.e.* Israel and God. Formerly God made the same challenge to the heathen. **justified,** declared to have done something righteous.

Forgiveness of sin (*v.* 25).—I. The nature of the blessing. 1. There is remission: 2. There is reconciliation. II. The author of the blessing. 1. The only being who has a right to bestow it;

a Is. xxxvii. 35, xlviii. 1; Eze. xxxvi. 22, etc.

"I, I alone, am able to pardon thee; thy strange gods only make thee sin, while only I can blot out thy sin; and yet thou hast

preferred them to Me!" — *Wordsworth.*

b "The Jews are called upon to specify a single instance in wh. they had done anything really meritorious." — *Henderson.*

v. 25. *Bp Hopkins*, ii. 261; *Dr. T. Crisp*, i. 267; *A. Fuller*, 515; *C. Bradley*, 217.

"The greatest attribute of heaven is mercy."—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

c G. Brooks.

"If thou wouldst be justified, acknowledge thy injustice; he that confesses his sin begins his journey towards salvation; he that is sorry for it mends his pace; he that forsakes it is at his journey's end."—*Quarles.*

d Dr. Raleigh.

a Ho. xii. 2, 3.

b Mat. Arnold.

c "I have left them to suffer the same treatment as the common people, stripped of their holy office, and in captivity."—*Fausset.*

"There are those who hold the opinion that truth is only safe when diluted—about one-fifth to four-fifths lies—as the oxygen of the air is with its nitrogen. Else it would burn us all up."—*Holmes.*

2. Or the power: 3. Or who has devised and executed a plan for bestowing it. III. The ground on which the author of the blessing bestows it. 1. Not on the ground of anything in us; 2. But of something in Himself. Apply:—(1) Seek this blessing; (2) Accept; (3) Be grateful for it.*c*

Confession to a priest opposed to God's method of forgiveness.—Suppose an eminent physician should visit a hospital once a week, and that he should require each patient to come before him with a correct catalogue and description of all his ailments—every "wound, and bruise, and putrefying sore" mentioned, with all the changes for the worse they have undergone during the week. Suppose him to require a description also of all the internal ailments from each,—the pain, and the sinking, and the fever, and the sickness,—the state, in short, of every separate organ as far as each knows, believes, or imagines. Then suppose that he probes every wound afresh, stays the incipient healing, and, on departing, leaves the injunction that every diseased man and woman—yes, and child, shall direct their attention and care more narrowly than ever to their wounds until the period of his return; and suppose that to help them in this, and in the process of recovery, he hangs a weight upon each, which he calls a medical penance, to stay the progress of corruption, and so takes his departure. A very cheerful time these poor creatures would have! Why, it would be better far for them never to see his face, and to have sent into them instead the most ignorant man that could be found on the street, if only he had a sunny face and a happy disposition,—if only he would sit and talk to them a little of fields, and flowers, and children, and human homes. There is really no exaggeration in this analogy. You know how to apply it. The call of a priest to his devotees to come to the confessional is a call to a spiritually sick soul to nourish and perpetuate its own disease. At best it is visiting a prisoner in the prison-house to condole with him, rather than to take him by the hand and lead him out into the light of open day.*d*

27, 28. (27) **first father,** with direct reference to Jacob: see *v.* 22.*a* "Prob. a more general sense is meant to be given to the expression 'thy forefathers,' 'thy race from its first beginning.'"*b* **teachers,** marg. *interpreters*, such organs of communication between Jehovah and His people as priests, prophets, and rulers. (28) **profaned,** *i.e.* deprived of their sacred dignity.*c* **princes,** *etc.*, or the chief priests. **curse,** solemn anathema, or excommunication. **reproaches,** Ps. cxxiii. 3, 4.

The sure word of prophecy.—Did you ever meet a Jew in the streets of London? You would not see him there if prophecy were not "sure;" for he would not have been a stranger in a strange land, but would have remained under his own vine and fig tree in Judæa. Did you ever hear that Jew mocked or see him slighted by others? It would not have been so if prophecy were not "sure:" for God would have suffered none to do him harm. Did you ever hear of the enslaved children of Ham? They would not have been "the servants of servants," if prophecy were not "sure." Did you ever see a group of gipsies in your rambles? Would they have been there if those prophecies were not "sure" which doomed the Egyptians, whose descendants they are, to be "scattered among the nations, and dispersed through all countries?" Do you ever read your Bible? You

would not have had it to read if prophecy were not "sure;" for the Jews were "broke off" the true vine, that you might be "graffed in."

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FOURTH.

1, 2. (1) **now,** *i.e.* "seeing that matters have come to such a pass." **chosen,** selected as special agents for preserving My truth in the world.[a] (2) **formed,** *etc.*, their birth, or origin, as from Egypt, is here referred to. **Jesurun,** a diminutive of endearment, meaning, *good child*, or *beloved one*.[b]

The Church comforted (*vv.* 1—5).—I. An address most gracious and comforting. The persons to whom the words are spoken are represented as—1. The servants of God; 2. The people of His special choice; 3. The objects of His wonderful interpositions. II. A promise eminently cheering. These are spiritual blessings. 1. Their nature; 2. Their value; 3. Their seasonableness; 4. Their abundance. III. A result truly refreshing. We have here—1. An important principle indicated; 2. The blessed truth declared.

In believing comfort.—He came that we might believe in Him, and that through this faith we might overcome the world, with all its temptations, its fears, and its shame, as well as its pleasures and lusts. And O, what comfort can be like that which it yields to the broken and contrite spirit, to feel that the Son of God has taken away his sins,—that, if he has a true living faith in Christ, they are blotted out for ever, and become as though they had never been? What joy, what peace can be like this, to feel that we are not our own, but Christ's? That we are become members of His holy body, and that our life has been swallowed up in His? that we can rest in His love with the same undoubting confidence with which a child rests in the arms of its mother? that if we believe in Him, we have nothing to fear about the feebleness and falling short of our services? for that He will work out our salvation for us; yea, that He hath wrought it out.[c]

3, 4. (3) **pour,** *etc.*, ch. xxxii. 15.[a] A common figure for influences from above.[b] **thirsty . . dry ground,** figures to represent the hopeless condition of the captive people. **offspring,** prob. only the usual Eastern mode of repeating a thought, and so meaning the same persons as the word "seed." Some take it to refer to proselytes. (4) **spring . . courses,** better read, "Thy seed shall spring up as willows among the grass beside canals of water."[c] The images denote luxuriance and abundance.

The Holy Spirit (*v.* 3).—I. A special province has been assigned to the Holy Spirit in the economy of redemption. II. The promise of the Holy Spirit is the great promise of the Christian dispensation. III. The influences of the Holy Spirit are manifold,—enlightening, sanctifying, comforting. IV. The indwelling and inworking of the Holy Spirit may be confidently expected of all believers. V. The bestowment of the Holy Spirit is connected with an appointed order of means, especially prayer. VI. The want of the influences of the Holy Spirit is not only a calamity but a sin.[d]

Note on v. 3.—This probably alludes to the way in which people

a Is. xli. 8.

b The Greek has, *My beloved Israel*; the Vulgate, *rectissime*; Luther, *Frommer*, pious one.

De. xxxii. 15, xxxiii. 5, 26.

vv. 1—28. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iii. 232.

"It is a little thing to speak a phrase of common comfort, wh. by daily use has almost lost its sense; yet on the ear of him who thought to die unmourned it will fall like choicest music." —*Talfourd.*

"Of all created comforts, God is the lender; you are the borrower, not the owner." —*Rutherford.*

c Archd. Hare.

a Is. xxxv. 7; Joel ii. 28; Jno. vii. 38; Ac. ii. 18.

b Eze. xxxiv. 26; Mal. iii. 10.

c Horsley.

"This v. describes the effect of the irrigation and effusion promised in the one before it. . . . The simple meaning is, that they shall grow as willows grow among the grass, *i.e.* in the moist and marshy spot." — *J. A. Alexander.*

"See the soft green willow springing, where the waters gently

pass; every way her free arms flinging o'er the moist and reedy grass. Long ere winter blasts are fled, see her tipp'd with vernal red, and her kindly flower display'd ere her leaf can cast a shade."—*Kible.*

v. 3. *Dr. S. Carr*, iii. 307; *J. Johnstone*, 172.

vv. 3—5. *Dr. Doddridge*, ii. 137; *H. Blunt*, ii. 278.

d G. Brooks.

e Roberts.

f Campbell.

a "Servants were inscribed with the names of their masters; soldiers inscribed themselves with the names of their general; and votaries of deities with the names of their god." — *Wordsworth.*

Re. xiii. 16.

b Comp. Mat. xxvii. 40, 42.

c Re. i. 8, 17, xxii. 13.

vv. 6, 7. *W. Reading*, i. 14.

d Dr. Talmage.

v. 6. The thought here so grandly and sublimely expressed is one which occurs in a striking manner also in the sacred book of the Buddhists, as the following passage from one of their most valued writings will show. The parallelism is, however, an evidence of the later introduction of the mythology which now numbers 600,000,000 worshippers. "Even I was, even at first, not

bathe. They do not in general, as in England, plunge into a stream or river, but go near a well or tank; and then, with a little vessel, pour water on their heads and bodies. See the man who is weary, he calls for his neighbour, or servant, or wife, to accompany him to the well; he then takes off his clothes (except a small strip round his loins), sits on his hams, and the individual who assists begins to "pour water" upon him till he be refreshed, and exclaims, "Potham," *i.e.* sufficient. In this way his body is invigorated, his thirst quenched, and he is made ready for his food."—*Note on v.* 4.—In many parts of South Africa no trees are to be found but near rivers. The trees are of various kinds: the most plentiful was the lovely mimosa: but willows, when there were any, always stood in front of the others, on the very margin of the water, which was truly a river of life to them. Like those in Isaiah's days, they required much water—could not prosper without it, therefore near it they were alone found:—a loud call, by a silent example, to Christians to live near the throne of grace, word of grace, and ordinances of grace, if they wish to grow in wisdom, knowledge, faith, and holiness.*f*

5, 6. (5) **one . . Lord's**, descriptions partly of the reconsecration to Jehovah of the pious-hearted, and partly of the adhesion of proselytes. **subscribe**, or enrol himself among the Lord's people.*a* Lit. *shall fill his land with letters.* (6) **king**, ch. xliii. 15.*b* **first . . God**, ch. xli. 4, xliii. 1, 10—12.*c*

Man fades like a leaf (*v.* 6).—I. Like the foliage, we fade away gradually. II. Like a leaf, we fade to make way for others. III. We, like the leaves, fade and fall amidst myriads. IV. As with variety of appearance the leaves depart, so do we. V. As the leaves fade and fall only to rise, so do we.*d*

Note on v. 5.—This is an allusion to the marks which were made by punctures, rendered indelible by fire or by staining, upon the hand, or some other part of the body, signifying the state or character of the person, and to whom he belonged. The slave was marked with the name of his master: the soldier of his commander; the idolater with the name or ensign of his god; and the Christians seem to have imitated this practice by what Procopius says upon this place of Isaiah. "Many marked their wrists or their arms with the sign of the cross, or with the name of Christ" (Lowth). To this explanation I shall subjoin the following extract from Dr. Doddridge's *Sermons to Young People*, p. 79, both as it corroborates and still further elucidates this transaction:—"Some very celebrated translators and critics understand the words which we render, 'subscribe with his hand unto the Lord,' in a sense a little different from that which our English version has given them. They would rather render them, 'another shall write upon his hand, I am the Lord's;' and they suppose it refers to a custom which formerly prevailed in the East, of stamping the name of the general on the soldier, or that of the master on the slave. As this name was sometimes borne on the forehead, so at other times on the hand: and it is certain that several Scriptures, which may easily be recollected, are to be explained as alluding to this: Rev. iii. 12, vii. 2, 3, xiii. 16, 17. Now from hence it seems to have grown into a custom among some idolatrous nations, when solemnly devoting themselves to the service of any deity, to be initiated into it by receiving some marks in their flesh, which might never wear out. This inter-

pretation the original will certainly bear: and it here makes a very strong and beautiful sense, since every true Christian has a sacred and indelible character upon him, which shall never be erased. But if we retain our own version it will come to nearly the same, and evidently refers to a practice which was sometimes used among the Jews (Neh. ix. 38, x. 29), and which is indeed exceedingly natural, of obliging themselves to the service of God, by setting their hands to some written articles, emphatically expressing such a resolution."[e]

7, 8. (7) call, the events into being.[a] ancient people, lit. *the people of eternity.* Israel, as the chosen, eternal people of God.[b] them shew,[c] *i.e.* the fictitious gods who are in rivalry with Jehovah. (8) fear, or quake not. that time, *i.e.* from the very time when I chose thee, and made thee acquainted with My will and purpose. no God, lit. *no rock.*[d]

The word fulfilled.—This word "fulfilled is generally used in reference to the accomplishment of prophecy. It is to be observed, however, concerning the expression "That it might be fulfilled," which is frequently used (Matt. ii. 15, 23, viii. 17, xii. 17, etc., etc.), the event does not happen merely for the purpose of making good the prediction. When it is said, for example, that they parted Christ's garments among them, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophets, etc., it is not intended that this was done in order to procure the accomplishment of the prediction, but rather that in or by this was fulfilled the prophecy, etc.; or thus it came to pass in fulfilment of the prophecy, etc. Those concerned had no knowledge generally of the fact that they were fulfilling a prophecy. Our Saviour of course knew it, and hence the peculiar expression. John xix. 28. There was a higher end in view than the mere fulfilment of an ancient oracle. The meaning in many of the above and parallel passages would be more accurately expressed by the word verified. "In this even was verified what was said by," etc.[e]

9. delectable things, specially desired and cherished.[a] own witnesses, sightless senseless idols need no one to attest their helplessness.[b] "The dumb idols are constituted witnesses against the stupidity of their worshippers."

The folly of idolatry—The Malagasy idol-maker.—The following illustration of this text is given by Messrs. Freeman and Johns, formerly missionaries in the island of Madagascar: "A married couple went some few years since to a person of this description, living about fifteen miles from the capital, and wished to purchase an idol. He had none to sell, but desired them to come next day. They went; he was still without any, but promised to have one by the evening. They remained till evening. The man went to a neighbouring forest, selected his tree, cut down a large bough, brought it home, and prepared his idol, leaving the smaller branches littered about near his fireplace. In the evening he invited our married friends to take their meal of rice with him, and they saw him put some of these selfsame branches in the fire to boil the rice. They returned home, having paid about two dollars for their new god. Shortly afterwards a young man, a Christian, called at their house, and happened to read to the wife that graphic description of idolatry

any other thing, that wh. exists, unperceived, supreme; afterwards I am that which is, and He who must remain am I."—*Address of Gotama "Bhagavat."*

e *Burder.*

a "Call forth the event; command that it shall happen."—*Barnes.*

b De. xxxii. 7–9.

c Comp. Is. xli. 21–24.

d De. xxxii. 4; Is. xvii. 10, xxvi. 4.

"A stronghold to take refuge in, and a solid foundation to build on."—*Faussel.*

v. 8. *P. Skelton,* i. 239; *Dr. T. Bishop,* 77.

e *Eadie.*

a "The exposure of idolatry in this and the following vv. is inimitably forcible and beautiful. With the most exact disposition of the parts are combined an exactness and vividness of delineation, a pointedness of sarcasm, a force of argument, and a concinnity and elegance of expression, wh. entitle the passage to the highest place among the compositions of the seer."—*Henderson.*

b "They themselves have the

plain evidence of the nullity of their gods, but they are blind to it that they may come to shame and ruin."—*Mat. Arnold.*

a Je. x. 5; Hab. ii. 18.

b *Spk. Com.*

v. 11. The first clause may be rendered, "the workmen themselves shall colour," *i.e.* be reddened with shame.

"Find earth where it grows no weed, and you may find a heart wherein no error grows."—*Knowles.*

c *J. C. Harrison.*

in the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, 'With part thereof he roasteth roast, maketh a fire, warmeth himself, and the residue thereof he maketh a god,' etc. She was astonished. It reminded her of what had just occurred, helped to convince her of the truth of the sacred volume, awakened deep attention, and led to the abandonment of the idol. She continued a learner, became a true disciple, and is now well known as Rafaravavy."

10, 11. (10) who . . nothing? strongly ironical question. A man making a god is a contradiction in terms.[a] (11) fellows, those who assist him in making the image. of men, are mere mortal men. gathered together, "to see if their unanimity in error will be of any service."[b]

Modern idolatry.—After leaving Zurich, we travelled on to Einsiedeln, at which place is an abbey founded by Meinrad, about A.D. 861, on the occasion of his receiving from Hildegard, abbé of Zurich, a miraculous (?) image of the Virgin. We were shown an image, alleged to be "the very same,"—since "miraculously rescued from the hands of sacrilegious robbers,"—now "more than 1,000 years old,"—a great black doll, a horrid-looking thing, with a glory of brass around its head, studded with jewels, and dressed in tawdry finery. Oh! how our hearts ached as we saw the poor deluded crowd of worshippers bowing before it, uttering their prayers, and seeking the intercession of one who had no power to help. As we "beheld their devotions" we longed to tell them of Him through whose finished work alone could they find acceptance, and "who ever liveth to make intercession for us."[c]

12, 13. (12) smith, worker in iron. hungry, *etc.*, so is constantly reminded that he is but a weak, dependent creature. The smith is here regarded as making the axe, or tool, for the carpenter. (13) line, or pencil.[a] planes, or chisels. remain . . house, a guardian for the family. A houschold deity.[b]

Heathenism.—We have a lamentable instance of heathenish superstition in the following incident, related by a missionary, resident for many years in the neighbourhood of the place where the circumstance occurred. There is a practice amongst the inhabitants of the isles of the South Seas, who still retain their idolatrous worship, of revering those of their fellow-creatures who have done some wonderful or daring deed, as gods, and worshipping them as such. In Samoa there is a high, steep, and craggy mountain; a young man, a native of the isle, was very desirous of becoming a god; he thought there was something very grand in being worshipped and prayed to: so, on one occasion, being in company with a number of his friends and companions, he turned to them, and said, "I will go to the top of that great mountain, and, if you see me flying, I shall be a god." His credulous companions shouted to him, "Away, away, we will worship you; away, away!" He toiled up the sides of the mountain, and arrived at the top. His friends eagerly watched him; presently he stretched out his arms, and the people cried out, "He is flying, he is flying: he is a god." Then the young man was seen to rise from the mountain, and he disappeared; his friends shouted again, "He is a god, he is a god; we will worship him." And so they did for many years; but after a long time his mangled body was found at the bottom of the other side of the

a "Sharp stylus."—*Gesenius.*

b Comp. Is. xl. 20, etc.

v. 12. Horsley and others think that the smith in this verse is contrasted with the carpenter. We have here described the worker in metals; and instead of "tongs," some cutting or cleaving instrument is intended. It has been translated, "the smith cutteth off a portion of iron."

"Error is sometimes so nearly allied to truth that it blends with it as imperceptibly as the colours of the rainbow fade into each other."—*W. B. Clulow.*

mountain, from which he had thrown himself down, while the people thought he was flying.

14, 15. (14) **strengtheneth,** rears to maturity. (15) to **burn,** various uses being found for the parts of the same tree. The incongruity of the uses is clearly set forth. The man puts his worship on a level with baking his bread.[a]

An idolater's confession (*v.* 14).—A convert, who, in his heathen days, had been priest of a temple, said, on being baptised at Goobee, "I have travelled, day by day, to gather flowers; I have talked, and put on temple garments; I have made offerings to the idols: yet no idol, either in dreams or when awake, has said to me, 'Thy sins are forgiven; thou receivest salvation; thy sins are washed away.' I have fasted and prayed; but it has never been said to me, 'Thou shalt escape hell, and enjoy heaven!' The idol is a lie. I forsake it, and embrace Jesus Christ as my Saviour and my God."

16, 17. (16) **part thereof,** shaped as a plate on which to serve the meat. **seen the fire,** *i.e.* perceived, or felt.[a] (17) **residue,** a mere bit that remains. **thou . . god,** the Heb. pronoun is emphatic, *thou, and thou alone.*

An African.—A few years ago, a young man, an African negro, addressed Mr. Johnson, a missionary, in language like this: "Massa, them words you talk last night strike me very much. When you preach you read the 15th and 16th verses of the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, and explain them, you show me how our country-people stand. Me say, 'Ah! who tell massa all this? He never been in my country.' You say, 'Do not your country-people live in that fashion!' I say, 'Yes, that true: God knows all things: He put them things in the Bible.' Massa, I so sure that the Bible is God's word, for man cannot put all them things there, because he no see it. That time I live in my country, I live with a man that make greegree. He take me into the bush, and teach me to make greegree too. He show me one tree: he say, 'That greegree tree:' he take country-axe, and cut some of that tree: he make a god; and he take the leaves, and that which was left, and give me to carry home. When we come home, he make a fire; and all the people come and sit round the fire. Then they cook and eat. When they done eat, the man take leaves of the greegree tree, and burn them in the fire, and then all the people stand round the fire, and clap their hands and cry, 'Aha! Aha!' Massa, when you read that verse (Isaiah xliv. 16), I can't tell you what I feel. You then begin to talk about the text (verse 20), 'He feedeth on ashes,' and I was struck again; for when they done cry, 'Aha! Aha!' they take the ashes, and make medicine they give to people when they be sick. You been see some greegree which look like dirt! that is the same ashes: they carry that round them neck, and they eat it sometimes. You see, massa, our poor countrymen feed upon ashes. For true, the Bible God's word."

18—20. (18) **they,** *etc.*, *i.e.* those thus foolishly thinking to *make* a god. **shut,** Heb. *daubed.*[a] (19) **considereth,** setteth to his heart. **abomination,** the Bible term for an idol.[b] (20) **ashes,** most part of his god—the tree of which it was made—having been reduced to ashes.[c] **deceived heart,** when it is

[a] "Earth-born block, watered by rain, essentially destined for heating and cooking, only formed into an idol-image by the way—such things gods!" — *Naegelsbach.*

"Ignorant men differ from beasts only in their figure." — *Cleanthes.*

[a] "To *see* is constantly used in the generic sense to *perceive*, by the senses."—*Gesenius.*

Je. x. 3—5.

"The little I have seen of the world teaches me to look upon the errors of others in sorrow, not in anger. When I take the history of one poor heart that has sinned and suffered and represent to myself the struggles and temptations it has passed through—the brief pulsations of joy, the feverish inquietude of hope and fear, the pressure of want, the desertion of friends, I would fain leave the erring soul of my fellow-man with Him from whose hand it came." — *Longfellow.*

[a] Is. vi. 10

"One hath plastered their eyes, that they see not, and their

hearts, that they discern not."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Not merely abominable, but the *essence* of what is so, in the eyes of a jealous God (1 Ki. xi. 5, 7)."—*Fausset.*

c Ashes often mentioned in Bible either as a symbol of human frailty (Ge. xviii. 27), or of deep humiliation (Jon. iii. 6). Here we have a proverbial expression for using ineffectual means and bestowing labour to no purpose. In the same sense, Hosea says that "Ephraim feedeth on wind" (xii. 1).

d Je. x. 14, xvi. 19; Ro. i. 25.

e 20. *R. Southgate*, ii. 44; *Dr. J. Jamieson*, i. 276; *G. Matthew*, 167; *S. Piggott*, 258; *E. G. Marsh*, *Bamp. Lec.* 71; *S. Bishop*, 267; *H. Alford*, i. 299.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

f H. Macmillan.

a "As speedily as the wind sweeps away the thick clouds, so do I drive away thy transgressions."—*Wordsworth.*
"More than once we had noticed in our early mornings dull masses of cloud in the sky. As the sun got up and gathered strength these all vanished. They did not drift

wrong it easily leads the intellect astray. lie . . hand, *i.e.* is not my handiwork a deception?[d]

The folly of spiritual idolatry (*v.* 20).—Of spiritual idolaters we will show—I. The folly of their ways. "Ashes" are—1. Unsuitable; 2. Unsatisfying; 3. Injurious. The source of their errors. (1) The heart is deceived by Satan; (2) The heart so deceived turns aside the whole man. II. The strength of their delusions. "They cannot deliver their souls," nor even say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Apply:—1. How thankful should we be for a Saviour; 2. How watchful against the remains of our corrupt nature.[e]

Feeding on ashes.—The expression "he feedeth on ashes" is proverbial in the East for that which is done to no purpose. The following extract, though not so strictly an illustration of the text, is much to the purpose. One of the most extraordinary examples of depraved or perverted appetite is the use of earth for food. This propensity is not an occasional freak, but a common custom, and is found among so large a number and variety of tribes, that it may be regarded as co-extensive with the human race. From time immemorial the Chinese have been in the habit of using various kinds of edible earth as substitutes for bread in time of scarcity; and their imperial annals have always religiously noticed the discovery of such bread-stones, or stone-meal, as they are called. On the western coast of Africa a yellowish kind of earth, called caovac, is so highly relished and so constantly consumed by the negroes that it has become to them a necessary of life. In the island of Java, and in various parts of the hill country of India, a reddish earth is baked into cakes, and sold in the village markets for food; while on the banks of the Orinoco, in South America, Humboldt mentions that the native Indians find a species of unctuous clay, which they knead into balls, and store up in heaps in their huts as a provision for the winter or rainy season. They are not compelled by famine to have recourse to this clay, for even when fish, game, and fruit are plentiful, they still eat it after their food as a luxury. The practice of eating earth is not confined solely to the inhabitants of the tropics. In the north of Norway, and in Swedish Lapland, a kind of white powdery earth, called mountain meal, found under beds of decayed moss, is consumed in immense quantities every year. It is mixed by the people with their bread in times of scarcity; and even in Germany it has been frequently used as a means of allaying hunger.[f]

21, 22. (21) remember, or think on these things, so as to take warning from them. be forgotten, better, *thou shalt not forget Me.* (22) blotted out, or swept away.[a] thick cloud, fig. to denote what is transient and evanescent. return, in penitence and faith.[b]

Not a cloud to be seen (*v.* 22).—Your attention is invited—1. To the Divineness of forgiveness; 2. Look at the completeness of pardon; 3. At the assurance which God gives the pardoned that they are forgiven; 4. The knowledge of pardon is a power to awaken love; 5. A motive to the pursuit of holiness; 6. And encourages us to bring others to God; 7. The assured are those who confess to God their sins[c]—*Sin as clouds.*—1. Clouds sometimes obstruct the beneficial influences of heaven coming upon the earth; so sin prevents the blessings of the Saviour's Gospel

flowing into the hearts of men ; 2. Clouds have their origin in the earth ; sin in its origin is beneath and not above ; 3. Clouds are often charged with evil—the electric fluid, the fearful storm : so is sin filled with the most woeful evils to humanity ; 4. Clouds assume every variety of shape, colour, and duration ; so sin has no set form, but varies according to persons, circumstances, times, and places ; 5. Clouds cannot be dispersed by any human agency : nor can sin be forgiven by any power less than Divine.[d]

Our sins a cloud.—Sin is but the cloud, as it were, behind which the everlasting sun lies in all its power and warmth, unaffected by the cloud ; and the light will yet strike,—the light of His love will yet pierce through, with its merciful shafts, bringing healing in their beams, and dispersing all the pitchy darkness of man's trangressions. And as the mists gather themselves up and roll away, dissipated by the heat of that sun in the upper sky, and reveal the fair earth below—so the love of Christ shines in, melting the mist and dissipating the fog, thinning it off in its thickest places, and at last piercing its way right through it, down to the heart of the man that has been lying beneath the oppression of this thick darkness, and who thought that the fog was the sky, and that there was no sun there above.[e]

23. **sing**, *etc.*, poetical call to inanimate creation to praise God for the promised deliverance. "The prediction of glorious and joyful changes, as in many other cases, is clothed in the form of an exhortation to all nature to rejoice."[a] **break forth**, Is. xiv. 7. **glorified himself**, brought honour to His name by His gracious work of redemption.

Redemption a ground of joy (*v.* 23).—I. The Lord hath redeemed His people. 1. By price ; 2. By power. II. Herein He hath also glorified Himself. 1. His grace and mercy ; 2. His truth and faithfulness. III. This is a ground of most exalted joy to the whole creation. 1. All, in earth and in heaven, are required to rejoice in it ; 2. The joy should be in proportion to the occasion of it.[b]

Imagery of Eastern language.—Here we have a specimen of the fervid and splendid imagery of Eastern language. Some people affect to despise the hyperboles, the parables, and high-toned allusions of such a style ; but they ought to recollect that they arise as much from the climate, the genius, and customs of the people, as do our more plain and sober effusions from opposite circumstances. When the god Ramar was going to the desert, it was said to him, "The trees will watch for you ; they will say, 'He is come, he is come!' and the white flowers will clap their hands. The leaves, as they shake, will say, 'Come, come ;' and the thorny places will be changed into gardens of flowers."[c]

24—26. (24) **maketh all**, not merely, hath created all, but *doeth all ;* executeth whatever He designs. **by myself**, without asking or needing help from any. "Jehovah asserts the exclusiveness of His creative and providential power."[a] (25) **tokens**, prognostics : pretended miracles. **liars**, Je. l. 36. **diviners**, or conjurers.[b] **backward**, with shame, especially by their predictions being unfulfilled. Defeated and disappointed. (26) **word**, or prophecy : esp. that of Isaiah.

An inveterate idolater brought to God.—One day while Mr. Wilson was teaching the people of Raiatea, a South-Sea Island,

away, or pass into a different region of the heavens, but they vanished on the spot, such was the absolute power of the desert sun. Clouds that would have brought a whole day's rain in our climate disappeared."—*Bonar.*

b De xxx. 2, 8 ; Ho. xiv. 1.

v. 21. *C. J. F. Clinton*, 157 ; *W. Nind*, ii. 52.

v. 22. *R. Warner* i. 103 ; *H. Blunt* 22 ; *W. Howarth*, 17.

c S. Martin.

d J. Bate.

e Maclaren.

a J. A. Alexander.

Ro. viii. 19, etc.

v. 23. *Dr. J. Peddie*, 311 ; *Bp. Dehon*, i. 341.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

"Even the miner, while clanking his chains, sings, as he lightens his labour with untaught music ; he too sings who, bending low on the oozy sand, drags the slow barge against the stream"—*Ovid.*

"What I can fancy, but never can express."—*Juvenal.*

c Roberts.

a Henderson.

b "Astrologers, men leading a retired, contemplative life, in order to study divination by the signs of the stars."—*Vitringa.*

vv. 24–26. *Bp Conybeare*, ii. 311.

v. 28. *Dr. A. M'Cool, Warb. Lec.* 117.

"There will be mistakes in divinity while men preach, and errors in governments while men govern."—*Sir D. Carleton.*

an old man stood up, and exclaimed, "My forefathers worshipped Oro, the god of war, and so have I, nor shall anything you can say persuade me to forsake this way. And," continued he, addressing the missionary, "what do you want more than you have already? Have you not won over such a chief, and such a chief?—ay, and you have Pomare himself! What want you more?" "All—all the people of Raiatea, and you yourself, I want!" replied Mr. Wilson. "No, no," cried the old man: "me! —you shall never have me. I will do as my fathers have done: I will worship Oro. You shall never have me. I assure you." Yet within six months from that time, this staunch, inflexible, inveterate adherent of the bloody superstition of Oro—the Moloch of the Pacific—abandoned his idol, and became a worshipper of the true God.

27, 28. (27) deep, the Euphrates, wh. Cyrus diverted from its course.[a] (28) Cyrus, the servant of God formerly introduced, but sometimes not named. shepherd, to collect and send home God's scattered flock. thou . . built, *comp.* 2 Chr. xxxvi. 22; Ezr. i. 1; Is. xlv. 13.

Cyrus.—One of the most remarkable characters of ancient history, and one that is particularly interesting to the Biblical student, is Cyrus, who was the subject of a prophecy that the most stubborn unbeliever cannot deny to have been fulfilled. The advent, and name, and acts of this great monarch were with a wonderful exactness predicted by the Prophet Isaiah (xliv. 28, xlv. 1—4, 13), and were most wonderfully accomplished (compare Ezra i. 1—4). Josephus, indeed, narrates (*Antiq.* xi. i. 1. 2) a remarkable story. He says that the prophecies of Isaiah respecting Cyrus were shown to that king, and that, struck with the Divine record, he was induced to issue his decree.

a "There is reference here to the Israelites' passage of the Red Sea, and prob. also to the operations of Cyrus in drying and turning the rivers of Babylon."—*Matthew Arnold.* Je. l. 38.

a "Heb. *Koresh*, which meant, in ancient Persian, *the Sun*. According to Strabo his original name was Agrælates; so that the name Cyrus was one of honour."—*Spk. Com.*

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIFTH.

1, 2. (1) his anointed, *comp.* Ps. xviii. 50.[a] Cyrus was God's instrument. He was raised up and directed by Jehovah, to work out His purpose of grace concerning His own people. loose, or ungird. two leaved gates, those, viz., of Babylon. "In Babylon there were a hundred gates, all of brass." gates . . shut, it is said that the gates leading to the river were actually left open on the night of Cyrus's taking of the city. (2) crooked, or rugged. Figure for difficulties that might be in the way of Cyrus.

Encouragement (v. 2).—I. Every good work is sure to meet with interruption and opposition. II. In every journey there will necessarily be rough places. III. Christians are not required to go anywhere where their Captain has not gone before them. IV. We are not to wait till difficulties are removed before we advance: "go forward," and as the feet touch the waters the stream will be divided. Faithful discharge of duty in everyday life is doing God's work; the promise therefore applies to the removal of crooked places in business, the family, etc.[b]

Without money and without price.—The shopkeepers at Jerusalem cry to the passers-by, "Ho, every one that hath money, come and buy!" God says, "Ho, every one that hath no money." A fruiterer said to Miss Rogers, "O lady, take of our fruit with-

a "He, first of the ancient conquerors, appears in other than a merely despotic and destructive aspect. Both in Greek and Heb. literature he is represented as the type of a just and gentle prince. He belongs to the only nation in the then state of the world which, in any sense at all approaching the Israelite, acknowledged the unity of the Godhead. The religion of the Persians was, of all the Gentile forms of faith, the most simple and the most spiritual. Their

out money and without price; it is yours; take all that you will." Miss R. adds, "He would gladly have laden us with the good things of his store, and then have claimed double their value."[c]

3, 4. (3) treasures, *etc.*, with poss. reference to Cyrus's defeat of Crœsus, the rich king of Lydia, whose treasure is said to have reached the value of £126.224.000 sterling. darkness, *i.e.* such as were hoarded in secret places. mayest know, or gain a deep impression of the fact.[a] (4) surnamed thee, calling thee "*My shepherd*," as in ch. xliv. 28. There may be reference to his new, or second name, Cyrus.

Hidden treasures.—As treasures are frequently hidden under ground in the East, by those that are apprehensive of revolutions; so the finding them is one great object, in their apprehension, of sorcery. We are told by travellers into the East, that they have met with great difficulties very often, from a notion universally disseminated among them that all Europeans are magicians, and that their visits to those Eastern countries are not to satisfy curiosity, but to find out, and get possession of those vast treasures they believe to be buried there in great quantities. These representations are very common; but Sir J. Chardin gives us a more particular and amusing account of affairs of this kind. "It is common in the Indies, for those sorcerers that accompany conquerors, everywhere to point out the place where treasures are hid. Thus at Surat, when Siragi came thither, there were people who, with a stick striking on the ground, or against walls, found out those that had been hollowed or dug up, and ordered such places to be opened." He then intimates that something of this nature had happened to him in Mingrelia. Among the various contradictions that agitate the human breast, this appears to be a remarkable one: they firmly believe the power of magicians to discover hidden treasures, and yet they continue to hide them. Dr. Perry has given us an account of some mighty treasures hidden in the ground by some of the principal people of the Turkish empire, which upon a revolution were discovered by domestics, privy to the secret. D'Herbelot has given us accounts of treasures concealed in the same manner, some of them of great princes, discovered by accidents extremely remarkable; but this account of Chardin's, of conquerors pretending to find out hidden treasures by means of sorcerers, is very extraordinary. As, however, people of this caste have made great pretences to mighty things in all ages, and were not unfrequently confided in by princes, there is reason to believe they pretended sometimes, by their art, to discover treasures anciently to princes, of which they had gained intelligence by other methods; and as God opposed His Prophets, at various times, to pretended sorcerers, it is not unlikely that the Prophet Isaiah points at some such prophetic discoveries in those remarkable words, Is. xlv. 3:—"And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." I will give them, by enabling some prophet of Mine to tell thee where they are concealed. Such a supposition throws a great energy into those words.[b]

5, 6. (5) beside me, De. iv. 35, 39, xxxii. 39; Is. xliv. 8.

abhorrence of idols was pushed almost to fanaticism."—*Stanley.*

b W. in Analyst.

c Miss Rogers.

a "This prophecy was prob. read by Cyrus, and exerted its influence on him. Such an influence Josephus tells us was exerted, and it is implied in the monarch's solemn recognition of Jehovah as the true God, and the author of his successes (Ezr. i. 2)."—*J. A. Alexander.*

v. 3. J. C. Dieteric, Ant. 598.

"Whoever shall look heedfully upon those who are eminent for their riches will not think their condition such as that he should hazard his quiet and much less his virtue to obtain it, for all that great wealth generally gives above a moderate fortune is more room for the freaks of caprice, and more privilege for ignorance and vice; a quicker succession of flatteries, and a larger circle of voluptuousness."—*Johnson.*

"Less coin, less care; to know how to dispense with wealth is to possess it."—*Reynard.*

b Harmer.

a Ps. xviii. 32.

girded thee,[a] fig. for personally strengthening him. (6) they may know, *i.e.* all the world.[b] sun . . west, "the two most distant geographical points known to the ancients are fixed on, including all the regions between."[c]

Paganism in England.—British Christians ought to recollect that their ancestors were once blind idolaters, serving them that by nature are no gods. Dr. Plaifere, in a sermon preached before the University of Cambridge, in 1573, remarks, "that before the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, no church here existed but the temple of an idol; no priesthood but that of paganism; no God but the sun, the moon, or some hideous image. To the cruel rites of the Druidical worship succeeded the abominations of the Roman idolatry. In Scotland stood the temple of Mars; in Cornwall, the temple of Mercury: in Bangor, the temple of Minerva; at Malden, the temple of Victoria; in Bath, the temple of Apollo; at Leicester, the temple of Janus; at York, where St. Peter's now stands, the temple of Bellona; in London, on the site of St. Paul's Cathedral, the temple of Diana: and at Westminster, where the Abbey rears its venerable pile, a temple of Apollo." Through the mercy of God, our country is now blessed with thousands of Christian churches, and multitudes of Gospel ministers. The land is full of Bibles: and British Christians, sensible of their privileges, are engaged in diffusing the light of Divine truth among the benighted nations.

7, 8. (7) light . . darkness, the assertion of the Divine unity as opposed to the dualistic notions of the Persians, who believed in two beings—*Ormuzd*, light; *Ahriman*, darkness.[a] peace, or national prosperity. evil, national adversity. (8) drop down,[b] in fertilising showers. righteousness, *etc.*, God's fidelity to His promise is His righteousness, and salvation or deliverance for His people that promise assures.[c] have created it, or him, *i.e.* Cyrus.

The efficacy of the Gospel (*v.* 8).—I. The import of this prophecy. 1. Its primary reference is to the restoration of the Jews to their own land: 2. Its ulterior reference is to the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. II. The peculiar beauty of the image under which it is conveyed. 1. Their mutual dependence as here intimated; 2. Their united operation as here described; 3. The true source and origin of all their efficacy. Apply:—(1) What a blessing the Gospel is! (2) What is to be done on our part to render it effectual? (3) To whom are we indebted if ever we are influenced by it for good?[d]

A priest of Oro.—When Messrs. Tyerman and Bennett, the deputation from the London Missionary Society, were at Huahine, they called upon an aged man, who was the last priest, at that place, of Oro, the god of war. In youth, he was large and powerful: his face was singularly tattooed, a mark of savage fierceness; his grey hair was cut short, excepting one lock, which had been allowed to grow long behind: and, what gave peculiar interest to his person and character, was the circumstance of his being blind. The facts connected with this event were remarkable. He had long withstood the Gospel, and refused to acknowledge the sanctity of the Sabbath, even after the authorities of the island had commanded its observance. One Sabbath morning, in contempt of the day, he went to work in his garden. On returning to his house, he became blind in a moment. He was

b "Several important movements in the direction of monotheism (notably, the Pythagorean) had their commencement about the time of Cyrus."—*Spk. Com.*

c *Henderson.*

Ps. cii. 15; Mal. i. 11.

vv. 5, 6. *L. Atterbury*, i. 46; *Bp. Richmond*, 164.

"Lycidas, the Athenian, could laugh with Aristophanes at legends of gods and demigods, whom their very priests represented as having more than the common infirmities and vices of mortal men."—*A. L. O. E.*

a "The great Persian reformer, Zoroaster, or Zerdusht, taught that there are two principles working in the universe—one good, the other evil. The one was termed Ormuzd, and was the presiding agent of all good; the other, Ahriman, in like manner presided over all evil. From the opposing action of these two powers Zoroaster explained the commingling of good and evil in the universe and in every creature."—*Bib. Things Not Gen. Known.*

b Dc. xxxii. 2.

c "The final aim of all God's providential acts was that the kingdom of heaven—and therein righteousness and salvation—should be planted upon earth."—*Spk. Com.*

dreadfully alarmed; his neighbours ran to his assistance: but an invisible hand was upon him, and had for ever closed up his eyes from seeing the sun. But the same hand, we may believe, opened the eyes of his understanding by the stroke which destroyed the light of the body: he immediately concluded that this affliction was a judgment upon him for disobeying (probably against strong, though long-resisted, internal convictions) the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. His countrymen were under the same impression. He humbled himself in the dust, mourned over his sins, confessed them, abjured idolatry, and embraced that religion which had already triumphed over almost every other heart in the island except his own. His conduct proved conformable to his professions as a Christian.[e]

9, 10. (9) **him . . Maker**, this appears to be addressed to the unbelieving among God's people, who hesitated to accept deliverance from an alien king. **potsherd**, Job ii. 8.[a] **clay**, *etc.*, ch. xxix. 16, lxiv. 8. (10) **woe . . forth**, "The writer's main design is to represent the doubt and discontent of men in reference to God's future dealings with them as no less monstrous than the supposition of a child's objection to its own birth."[b]

Strivings with God (*v.* 9).—Attention is invited to two leading ideas. 1. The denunciation pronounced against the enemies of Christ; 2. The direction given to His dear children.[c]

Note on v. 10.—Dr. Boothroyd has, "to a mother, what dost thou bring forth?" Unnatural as is this language, yet children often use it to their parents. Listen to a son who has been chided by his father for bad conduct—"Why did you beget me? Did I ask you? Why reprove me for evil? Whose fault is it? Had you not begotten me, should I have been here?" The father replies, "Alas for the day in which I became thy parent." The mother says, "Why did I bear this dog? Have I given birth to a monkey? Yes! I am the mother of this ass."[d]

11—13. (11) **ask**, *etc.*, *i.e.* instead of striving with Me in regard to My purposes, try to find out what they are, and you will find how gracious they are. **command ye me**,[a] commit it altogether to Me. You may be sure I shall work only for your good. (12) **my hands**, fig. for the putting forth of Divine power. (13) **him**, Cyrus: against whose agency in their deliverance some of the Jews found objection. **my captives**, lit. *My captivity.*

Praying children—Prayer for parents.—A Sunday scholar in Yorkshire heard a minister say that "prayerless persons would not go to heaven." It deeply impressed her mind. When she returned home she repeated it to her mother, and added, "Mother, you never pray." "I cannot pray," was the reply. "Yes! you can pray." "I tell you I cannot pray!" answered the mother, angrily. "Then, mother, I'll pray for you." She knelt down, and prayed, "O Lord, forgive my mother, and save her from swearing. O Lord, forgive my father, and keep him from getting drunk." The father, who was then at a tavern drinking, came home immediately, and finding his daughter praying for him and his wife, his mind was deeply impressed; and both parents were ultimately converted through the conduct of their little girl.—*A prayer meeting in the fields.*—A little girl in the country, belonging to a Sunday school, was in the habit of leaving home

v. 7. *W. Leighton-house*, 1; *T. Dorrington*, ii. 239; *W. Stephens*, ii. 1; *W. Jones*, ii. 1; *P. Houghton*, 109; *T. Belsham*, ii. 61.

r. 8. *A. Pirie*, iii. 1; *W. Romaine*, vi. 143.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

e R. T. S.

a Je. xviii. 6; Ro. ix. 20.

b J. A. Alexander.

r. 9. *F. Bragge*, 203; *J. Balguy*, ii. 39; *W. Jay*, i. 338.

c D. Denham.

"Mankind at large always resemble frivolous children; they are impatient of thought, and wish to be amused."—*Emerson.*

d Roberts.

a Better, *commend it to Me.*

"Will ye take the disposition of things out of My hands, and direct Me how I am to deal with My own chosen people?" *Mat. Arnold.*

r. R. Erskine, viii. 233.

"God has given to mankind a common library, His creatures; and to every man a proper book, himself, being an abridgment of all the others. If thou wouldst read with understanding, it will make thee a great master of philosophy, and a

true servant of the Divine author; if thou but barely read, it will make thee thy own wise man, and the author's fool."—*Quarles.*

"Prayer is the slender nerve that moveth the muscles of omnipotence."—*Tupper.*

"Prayer is the voice of faith."—*Horne.*

on the Sunday immediately after dinner. Her father, wondering as to the cause, resolved one day to follow her; at length she arrived at the spot where some others of her own age were assembled. The father, still doubting what the object could be, concealed himself behind the bank that separated him from the little group. One of the number then gave out a hymn, which the others joined in singing, and then she engaged in prayer. Another of the little band gave out a hymn: again they sang and prayed, and the anxious and delighted father heard his own little girl give out the hymn,—

"Lord, how delightful 'tis to see
A whole assembly worship Thee!
At once they sing, at once they pray,
They hear of heaven, and learn the way."

And then she, too, joined in prayer for parents, companions, and teachers. Happy the father who had such a child, and happy the child who knows the worth of prayer.

14, 15. (14) **the labour of,** *comp.* ch. xliii. 3. **Ethiopia,** Cush. **Sabeans,** people of Saba, or Meröe, on the Upper Nile, centre of a great caravan trade bet. Ethiopia, Egypt, and North Africa, Arabia, and India. **men of stature,** Agatharchides describes the Sabeans as singularly handsome: and Herodotus speaks of the Ethiopians as the tallest of men. **over unto thee,** *i.e.* to acknowledge Israel's God. **in chains,**[a] the fig. of submissiveness. (15) **hidest thyself,** an exclamation of admiration at the gracious mystery of the Divine dealings.[b]

The Great King.—Here is encouragement to the vilest sinner, and comfort to the self-succourless and lost sinner, who have spent all their money, their time, and endeavours upon those duties and strivings that have been but poor physicians to them. Oh, look up here to the Lord Jesus, who can do that cure for thee in a moment which all creatures cannot do in many years. What bolts, what strong fetters, what temptations and miseries art thou locked into! Behold, the Deliverer is come out of Zion, having satisfied justice and paid a price to ransom poor captives, with the keys of heaven, hell, and thy unruly heart in His hand, to fetch thee out with great mercy. Oh, look up to Him, sigh to heaven for deliverance from Him, and be glad and rejoice at His coming.—The Gospel commandeth us to behold, not our own good works, our own perfection, but God the Promiser, and Christ the Mediator. Here, on the one side, doubting and despair must needs follow; but, on the other side, assurance of God's favour, and joy of the Spirit. For we cleave unto God, who cannot lie; for He saith, Behold, I deliver My Son to death, that through His blood He may redeem thee from thy sins, and from eternal death. And this is the reason that our doctrine is most sure and certain, because it carrieth us out of ourselves, that we should not lean to our own strength, our own conscience, our own feelings, and our own works, but to that which is without us—the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive us.[d]

16, 17. (16) **they,** *i.e.* idol makers, and idol worshippers.[a] (17) **everlasting salvation,**[b] constant and continuous. A salvation ever ready for them when they need saving. **not ashamed,** contrast *v.* 16. **world without end,** an expression which justifies our applying the promise to God's Church in all ages.

"Spiritual chains of faith and love."—*Wordsworth.*

b "In this *v.* the Church admires the mysterious character of the Divine counsels and modes of action, with special reference to the captivity and restoration."—*Henderson.*

v. 15. *Superville* (*père*), i. 333; *C. Bertheau*, ii. 166; *J. Balguy*, ii. 261, i. 113; *Dr. J. Napleton*, ii. 320; *J. B. Marsden*, 340; *A. Gatty*, i. 417.

c T. Sheppard.

"Man should be ever better than he seems, and shape his acts and discipline his mind to walk adorning earth, with hope of heaven."—*Aubrey de Vere.*

d Luther.

a "The domination of Cyrus and of Persia conduced greatly to the overthrow of idolatry at Baby-

Israel saved in the Lord (*v.* 17).—I. The glorious object. 1, Whatever salvation includes; 2. This salvation is in the Lord, Christ. II. The character of the persons to whom everlasting salvation is promised, Israel. 1. Israel a name of great distinction in Scripture; 2. True Israelites are those who have given their unfeigned consent to be God's people; 3. They live in unreserved subjection to the laws and government of God's kingdom. III. The grounds of the certainty of their salvation. 1. That Christ has taken possession of it in His name; 2. Christ's intercession; 3. His mighty power which is engaged for them; 4. God's promise. Apply:—(1) How precious should Christ be to believers; (2) They have good reason to love Christ's appearance; (3) What an encouragement to duty.[c]

A stronghold assailed.—Numerous groups of islands in the Pacific have rapidly yielded to the influence of the Gospel. About ninety islands have cast their idols "to the moles and to the bats," and about 400,000 idolaters have nominally (not all truly) embraced Christianity. One of the strongest holds of cannibalism and cruelty is found in the Feejee islands. When the posts of their temples are erected, human beings are sacrificed, their bodies baked in native ovens, and the flesh eaten by the imbruted worshippers. In 1839, a victorious war party, returning from an exterminating war, placed thirty living children in baskets, and hoisted them up to the masthead of their canoes, to dangle in the wind as trophies of victory. By the motion of the canoes the helpless victims were dashed against the mast, and their piercing cries were speedily hushed in the silence of death. So numerous were the victims taken in this war, that the most greedy cannibals were for a time glutted with human flesh! In some instances, this execrable appetite for human flesh has become so strong, that bodies have actually been dug up out of the grave to gratify it! The Gospel has assailed this stronghold. The Wesleyan Missionary Society, from whose quarterly paper these facts are taken, has a successful mission among them; 540 have expressed hope in Christ, and are regular communicants. Nearly 1,000 persons, adults and children, are receiving religious instruction in the schools. Thousands of the natives who have not embraced Christianity have been greatly benefited by the Gospel. Their manners have been reformed, their morals materially improved. Cannibalism has been abandoned by multitudes, wars are less frequent and less cruel. A few influential chiefs have united with the people of God. One of these was one of the greatest cannibals and warriors that Feejee ever produced. His conversion has astonished his countrymen, and gladdened the hearts of the missionaries.[d]

18, 19. (18) **not in vain**, Heb. *tohu*, waste.[a] (19) **in secret**, contrast the openness of Divine revelations, with the uncertainty and secrecy of heathen oracles.[b] **seek . . vain**, this, however, may describe the invitation of the idol-gods.

The earth prepared for man.—I have already referred to the sombre, unproductive character of the earliest terrestrial flora with which we are acquainted (Old Red). It was a flora unfitted apparently for the support of either graminivorous bird or herbivorous quadruped. The singularly profuse vegetation of the coal measures was, with all its wild luxuriance, of a resembling cast. So far as appears, neither flock nor herd could have

lon, and in other countries, and so prepared the way for the preaching and reception of the true religion."—*Wordsworth.*

b Is. xxvi. 4.

c Theta in 400 Sks.

"It is much easier to meet with error than to find truth; error is on the surface, and can be more easily met with. Truth is hid in great depths; the way to seek does not appear to all the world."—*Goethe.*

"All errors spring up in the neighbourhood of some truth. They grow round about it, and, for the most part, derive their strength from such contiguity."—*Binney.*

"Error when she retraces her steps, has farther to go before she can arrive at truth than ignorance."—*Colton.*

d Cheever.

a "There seems to be here a special reference to the deserted state of the Holy Land during the captivity."—*Henderson.*

b Comp. Jno. xviii. 20; De. xxix. 29, xxx. 11.

"Bees and butterflies are pre-

sent in increased proportions in the later Tertiary deposits; but not until that terminal creation to which we ourselves belong was ushered on the scene did they conceive their fullest development. . . Flowers in general were profusely produced just ere he [man] appeared, to minister to that sense of beauty which distinguishes him from all the lower creatures, and to which he owes not a few of his most exquisite enjoyments."

c H. Miller.

"How poor, how rich, how abject, how august, how complicate, how wonderful is man! "—*Young.*

"Man is an animal that makes bargains; no other animal does this; one dog does not change a bone with another."—*A. Smith.*

d Agassiz.

a Je. x. 5; Am. v. 26.

vv. 21, 22. *H. M'Neile,* 36.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

"Nature is the thrifty thing in the world; she never wastes anything; she undergoes change, but there is no annihilation; the essence lived on its greenest and richest plains; nor does even the flora of the Oolite seem to have been in the least suited for the purposes of the shepherd or herdsman. Not until we enter on the Tertiary periods do we find floras amid which man might have profitably laboured as a dresser of gardens, a tiller of fields, or a keeper of flocks and herds. Nay, there are whole orders and families of plants of the very first importance to man, which do not appear until late even in the Tertiary ages. Some degree of doubt must always attach to merely negative evidence, but Agassiz, a geologist whose statements must be received with respect by every student of the science, finds reason to conclude that the order of the *Rosaceæ*—an order more important to the gardener than almost any other, and to which the apple, the pear, the quince, the cherry, the plum, the peach, the apricot, the nectarine, the almond, the raspberry, the strawberry, and the various brambleberries belong, together with all the roses and the potentillas—was introduced only a short time previously to the appearance of man. And the true grasses—a still more important order, which, as the corn-bearing plants of the agriculturist, feed at the present time at least two-thirds of the human species, and in their humbler varieties form the staple food of the grazing animals—scarce appear in the fossil state at all. They are peculiarly plants of the human period."[d]—"It is evident that there is a manifest progress in the succession of beings on the surface of the earth. This progress consists in an increasing similarity to the living fauna, and among the vertebrates, especially in their increasing resemblance to man. But this connection is not the consequence of a direct lineage between the faunas of different ages. There is nothing like parental descent connecting them. The fishes of the Palæozoic age are in no respect the ancestors of the reptiles of the Secondary age, nor does man descend from the mammals which preceded him in the Tertiary age. The link by which they are connected is of a higher and immaterial nature, and their connection is to be sought in the view of the Creator Himself, whose aim in forming the earth, in allowing it to undergo the successive changes which geology has pointed out, and in creating successively all the different types of animals which have passed away, was to introduce man upon the surface of our globe. Man is the end towards which all the animal creation has tended from the first appearance of the first Palæozoic fishes."[d]

20, 21. (20) escaped, from Cyrus's conquests. set up,[a] or carry in their processions. (21) declared this, again reverting to the fulfilment of Jehovah's prophecies as proof of Jehovah's sole Divine claim. just, *etc.*, Ro. iii. 26.

Jehovah a just God and Saviour (*v.* 21).—Consider—I. The character of God here stated. 1. As contrasted with that of all the heathen deities; 2. As shining forth in His own proper and harmonious perfections. II. The regard due to Him in that character. 1. Fear; 2. Trust; 3. Obedience.[b]

The Creator (*v.* 18).—It may safely be argued that if the Lord created not the earth in vain, He created not the heavens in vain: and as "His delights are in the habitable places of the earth," so His delights are in the habitable places of the heavens. But the passage in question, taken in connection with its context, cannot, we think, give us "any authority to believe that

the planets are inhabited by human beings." It probably refers to the rehabitation of the land by the Jews upon their return from captivity in Babylon. Some, however, have argued upon the authority of this text that the earth, after the resurrection, having been purified by fire, will be again inhabited, and become the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.[c]

22, 23. (22) ends of the earth,[a] remnants gathered from the most distant places. (23) sworn, Ge. xxii. 16; He. vi. 13. knee . . bow, Phi. ii. 10.[b] The N. T. references justify our referring this to Christ.

Looking to Christ (*v.* 22).—I. Explain the duty here expressed by the metaphor of looking. A man's looks often discover the frame and condition of his mind. Looking to Christ implies—1. A particular notice and distinct knowledge of Him; 2. An importunate eagerness for relief from Him; 3. A wishful expectation of deliverance from Him; 4. A humble dependence upon Him for salvation; 5. A universal, cheerful submission to His authority; 6. A hearty approbation of Him as Saviour, and supreme affection to Him; 7. Joy and gratitude for His delivering goodness. II. Urge it upon you by sundry important considerations. 1. It is the salvation that is here offered; 2. It may be obtained upon low terms; 3. It is Immanuel that invites and commands you to look; 4. It is He to whom we are to look; 5. He is able to save us upon our looking to Him: 6. Look to Him, for as He is God so there is none else; 7. You are especially invited, being especially meant by those in the ends of the earth.[c] —*Another.*—I. The duty: looking to Jesus with the eye of faith. 1. Exclusively; 2. Earnestly; 3. Humbly; 4. Hopefully; 5. Continually. II. The blessing. Salvation—1. From sin: 2. From hell. III. The persons. 1. Men of all nations; 2. Of all circumstances; 3. Of all characters. Apply:—Look—(1) Because the blessings are great; (2) Because the terms are simple; (3) Because the Saviour is God: (4) Because if you look not to Jesus, you must look in vain elsewhere.[d]

24, 25. (24) surely, *etc.*, better, "Only in Jehovah, shall each say," etc. righteousness, or fidelity to promise. strength, ability to execute what is promised. (25) justified, or shown in deliverance to be the God-fearing nation.[a] glory, or boast themselves.

Glorying in the Lord (*vv.* 24, 25).—I. The believer's source of salvation. 1. The source of his righteousness; 2. Of his strength: 3. Of his justification. II. The believer's humble acknowledgment. It is the language of—1. Humble confession; 2. Of humble gratitude; 3. Of humble confidence; 4. Of humble but exulting triumph; 5. This language is rendered more striking by contrast. Apply:—(1) To Him men shall come; (2) To Him they ought to come.[b]

Our Surety.—O how marvellous a contrivance is there where the blessed Majesty of God finds an argument in Himself, when man had none wherewithal to plead! The Son was found in the form of a servant, and became our nearest kinsman, to redeem the inheritance, where His people's standing is ensured by another surety and strength than their own; not on their apprehending, but their being apprehended; where the Lord does oblige Himself by bond to make that good which is only of grace, and is

remains; matter is eternal."—*Binney.*

c Homilist.

a Comp. Nu. xxi. 8; Jno. iii. 14, 15.

b Ro. xiv. 9—11.

r. 22. *S. Davies*, ii. 252; *J. Hordern*, 133; *J. Nittingfleet*, 338; *W. Butcher*, i. 1; *J. H. Stewart*, 1; *A. B. Evans*, 21.

c Pres. Davies.

"Perhaps if we could penetrate nature's secrets, we should find that what we call weeds are more essential to the well-being of the world than the most precious fruit or grain."—*Hawthorne.*

"Man is not made to question, but adore."—*Young.*

d G. Brooks.

a "The people of the Jews shall in the Lord be justified before men, and openly glory in their God. The oppressors reproached them, loaded them with calumny, and boasted even of a right to oppress them, as abandoned by their God; but when God shall work out their deliverance, that shall be their justification from these hard censures, and therefore they shall glory in it."—*Mat. Henry.* 1 Co. i. 30, 31.

b Zeta in 400 Sks.

most freely given; where He both frames the desire within the soul and satisfies it. (Isa. xlv. 24; Jer. iii. 19; Ezek. xvi. 4, 9.)[c]

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SIXTH.

1, 2. (1) **Bel . . Nebo,** Bel was prob. the same as the Phœnician sun-god Baal; and Nebo, the planet Mercury, or Hermes.[a] Bel appears in such names as Belshazzar, and Nebo in such as Nebuchadnezzar. **upon . . cattle,** helpless things that needed to be carried.[b] **carriages,** *etc.*, better rend., "Your burdens are packed up (as) a load to the weary (beast)."[c] (2) **they stoop,** *etc.*, *i.e.* the gods. **not deliver,** the captive and dishonoured images in wh. they were supposed to reside. **themselves,** Heb. *their soul;* prob. used sarcastically.

A Bechuana's view of idolatry.—A Bechuana man, says a missionary, once came into my house and sat himself down. He took up one of our missionary sketches that was lying near him; having looked at it, he concluded that the figures upon it—ugly ones—represented living animals. It never entered into his mind that man would make a thing that never existed. He asked my little daughter Mary, "What game is this?" She said, "They are not game; there are nations that worship these things." "Oh!" said he, "how you tell fibs." She replied, "I am not telling fibs. I heard mamma say so, and my mamma does not tell fibs." He asked her again what game they were, and she again told him that they were things that were worshipped, for they have no name for idols. He burst out into an exclamation of wonder, questioned her again, but received the same answer—that people worshipped these things the same as her papa wished them to worship Jehovah and Jesus. The man was full of amazement, and repeated that she was telling fibs; but she maintained the truth of what she had said, and told him to go to her papa. He came to me and said, "Look at that; your daughter says so-and-so. Is it true?" I said, "It is." Having looked at me with astonishment, he said, "I know you do not tell lies;" and laying the paper down upon a piece of timber that I was planing, he looked at it, put his hands to both sides of his head, and waving it backwards and forwards, said, "The people that make these things of wood and stone.—have they got heads like Bechuanas?" "Yes," I replied, "they have heads." "Have they got legs?" "Yes, they have legs." "Have they a pair of bellows to breathe through?" (he meant lungs.) "Yes." The man's wonder continued to increase, and he then asked, "Can they talk, and think, and speak? Can they reason? Can they explain a difficult thing? Can they speak in a public meeting like our senators?" On being told that they could do all these things, he said, "After this, never say that the Bechuanas are either foolish or ignorant." Taking from his neck a whistle made of ivory, and carved with some device, perhaps a man's head, or a buffalo, or a giraffe, he looked at the whistle with great reverence, and nodding his head in a very solemn way, he said, "What would my people think if I were to worship that?" Just at that moment, while he was talking with much animation, his staff dropped from his hand. He grasped it, and pointing to the picture, he held up his staff and

[c] *Fleming.*

[a] "In the star-worship of Babylon, Bel was the planet Jupiter; and it has been conjectured that Nebo was the planet Mercury. The temple of Bel was one of the wonders of Babylon."—*Mat. Arnold.*

[b] "The Prophet describes the fall and removal of the Bab. idols in language of the keenest satire. They had formerly been carried about by the priests in solemn procession, but should now be broken in pieces, and borne away by the enemy on the backs of beasts of burden, which, sinking down under their weight, they should not be able to relieve."—*Henderson.*

[c] *J. A. Alexander.*

"Your golden images, wh. were once carried by you with joy in festal processions, are now lifted up as loads to be carried away on the back of beasts of burden, panting under their weight."—*Wordsworth.*

Is. xxi. 9; Je. l. 2.

rv. 1, 2. *W. Reading*, iii. 14.

rv. 1—13. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iii. 246.

said, "This looks as well as this monster, and I might as well worship my staff just as you worship Jehovah. What would my people think if I were to do so? They would think I was a madman, and would throw me over a precipice, and cover me with stones."[d]

3, 4. (3) **borne**, *etc.*, this expression contrasts Jehovah's care of His people with the helplessness of the idol gods even to carry their own images.[a] (4) **I am He**, unchangeably the same. **hoar hairs**,[b] *comp.* Ex. xvi. 14, for word *hoar*.

God's promise to the aged (*v.* 4).—I. God's promise to His aged servants in the text. 1. He promiseth to support them under their burdens, and carry them through their difficulties; 2. He will comfort them under their afflictions and sorrows; 3. He will deliver them out of all their fears and tribulations. II. To consider the reasons suggested in the text, why they should confide in this promise. 1. He is your Maker: 2. He hath been careful of you and kind to you hitherto; 3. He is an unchangeable God. Apply:—(1) Unreasonable and unbecoming for aged saints to sink under their burdens and afflictions; (2) Aged saints are under great obligations to God, and should be faithful unto death; (3) Young persons should choose God as the guide of their youth, if they desire that He should be the support and comfort of their age.[c]

Comforts to the afflicted.—Misfortunes, lack or loss of riches, health, and such things, come not rashly, but by the providence of our celestial Father. Why, then, should we not take them well, and, after the example of Job, blessing His name, give Him thanks for them? Specially considering that adversities chancing to them which love the Lord, are not tokens of His anger, but of His fatherly love, rather, and friendly care. The more part of those whom God hath chosen to be of His "little flock" have been wretched in the respect of the world, and miserable, tossed, and turmoiled with manifold misfortunes, distracted and unquieted with continual sorrows.[d]—These afflictions and repulses, which seem to be discouragements, are indeed the merciful incitements of grace. If God did mean judgment to my soul, He would either withdraw the fuel or pour water upon the fire, or suffer it to languish for want of new motions; but now that He continues to me the means and opportunities of good, I shall misconstrue the intentions of my God if I shall think His crosses sent rather to damp than to quicken His Spirit in me.[e]

5—7. (5) **liken me, Is. xl. 18, 25.** (6) **they**, *i.e.* the idol-worshippers, especially the wealthier classes of them.[a] **lavish**, sparing no expense. The Babylonian idols were of very costly construction. (7) **bear . . shoulder**, as a heavy dead weight. **not remove**, seeing he has no life or power. **not answer**, having no hearing and no voice.[b]

God's care for His people (*vv.* 3—5).—Consider—I. What He has done for His people,—carried them as a father his child; in this way He still carries His true Israel. II. What He has engaged to do for them. 1. He promised the Jews a continuance of His care: 2. He engages to keep His spiritual Israel to the end. III. His unrivalled title to our regard. 1. To your confidence; 2. To your love. Apply—(1) To those who entertain

d Cheever.

a De. i. 31. "God compares Himself to a nurse, tenderly carrying a child: contrast Moses' language, Nu. xi. 12."—*Fausset.*

b "Even to your old age, when you grow unfit for business, when you are compassed with infirmities, and perhaps your relations begin to grow weary of you, yet I am the same."—*Mat. Henry.* Ex. xix. 4; De. xxxii. 11, 12, xxxiii. 27; Is. lxiii. 9.

c *Job Orton.*

v. 4. *J. Farmer*, 281; *H. R. Revell*, 84; *W. Jay*, iii. 267.

v. 3. "'True, this fiendish son was borne from my belly. Ten long moons did I carry him in my womb,' 'Is it for this I have carried him so long in my womb? My fate! my fate! alas! my fate!'"—*Roberts.*

d *W. Hugh.*

e *Bp. Hall.*

a "The picture given of the stupid conduct of the idol-worshippers is exceedingly striking, and quite drawn to the life."—*Henderson.*

b "The idol is not only the work of man's hands, but entirely dependent on him for the slightest mo-

tion."—*J. A. Alexander.*

c C. Simeon, M.A.

vv. 5—9. *Dr. F. Sadlier*, iii. 50.

"There are in certain heads a kind of established errors against which reason has no weapons. There are more of these mere assertions current than one would believe. Men are very fond of proving their steadfast adherence to nonsense."—*Von Knobel.*

"Falsehood always endeavoured to copy the mien and attitudes of truth."—*Johnson.*

a Comp. Is. xlii. 14, xliii. 18, xlv. 21.

b Esp. *the eagle.* It appears that Cyrus was the first to use the eagle as a military ensign. He was also singularly rapid in his movements, and so resembled the eagle.

c Dr. W. Newell.

v. 8. *J. Barker*, ii. 222; *E. Stone*, 215.

vv. 9, 10. *Adn. Daubeny*, ii. 133; *J. Martineau*, ii. 301.

"Falsehood avails itself of haste and uncertainty."—*Tacitus.*

a "Bulls in intellect."—*Hitzig.*

a rival in their heart; (2) To those who profess themselves to have experienced God's tender care.[c]

Romish idolatry and its consequences.—"See the chapel, it is the time of pilgrimage," the man answered: and I did see a chapel, from which the place (Lastelle) obtains its popular name, Bethanane, where is a miraculous image of the truly blessed but strangely misrepresented woman who was chosen to be the mother of the Saviour's humanity. This was the time of pilgrimage, when devout persons resort from even considerable distances to make prayers and offerings to the figure which they have "borne upon the shoulder, and set in its place, from whence it cannot remove." The asses, ponies, and carts, which had brought many of the devotees, were resting outside on the grassy wayside: and many female pilgrims, having ended their devotions, came out in their large scarlet capes and hoods to harness their steeds, and retrace their paths. I do believe that nothing has tended more to the infidelity and profanity now so common in France than this idolatrous worship of the Virgin Mary. The tawdry image, enveloped in shreds of would-be finery, crowned with faded, dirty artificial flowers, covered with gilding, and honoured by little wretched candles burning before it, is so well calculated to disgust an intellectual, comprehensive mind, which might bow in submission—which does, even compulsorily, bow in submission to the majesty of Him whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, yet turns disgusted from such tangible objects of adoration; and then, in the natural alienation of the proud human heart from God and holiness, couples man's inventions with Heaven's eternal truth, and because it cannot believe all, professes to believe none.

8—11. (8) **shew . . men,** "not such children as to confound Me with these dumb idols, who cannot counsel or save." Act a manly and rational part. (9) **former things,** the miracles wrought by Jehovah for the fathers.[a] (10) **declaring,** or prophesying. **my counsel,** or My purpose shall be executed. (11) **ravenous bird,** or bird of prey,[b] referring to Cyrus as coming from Persia.

The pleasure of God (*v.* 10).—That God will do all His pleasure is proved—1. By the testimony of Scripture; 2. By His own grand characteristics; 3. By the history of the universe,—fallen angels, nations, man; the plans of men depend for success upon the pleasure of God; the conversion of men depends upon the pleasure of God—His pleasure will be accomplished in the death of His creatures.[c]

You cannot preach me (*v.* 8).—Mr. Spurgeon, in a recent sermon, said to his hearers: "Read the sermons of Wesley and Whitefield, and what is there in them? It is no severe criticism to say that they are scarcely worthy to have survived, and yet those sermons wrought marvels, and well they might. In order to understand such preaching, you need to see and hear the man; you want his tearful eye, his glowing countenance, his pleading tone, his bursting heart. I have heard of a great preacher who objected to have his sermons printed, 'Because,' said he, 'you cannot print me!'"

12, 13. (12) **stouthearted,**[a] obdurate ones. Addressed to the unbelieving ones among the captive Jews. (13) **my**

righteousness, or the fulfilment of My faithful word. my glory, My splendour. "The splendour which comes from Me." [b]

God's voice to sinners (*vv.* 12, 13).—In these words we have three things. I. A wretched condition: insensibility to the good; alienation from the good. II. A glorious promise: Divine deliverance, which is near—1. In the Gospel of Christ; 2. In the ministry of the good; 3. In the suggestions of conscience; 4. In the spiritual influence of events. III. An urgent duty: hearken—1. Earnestly; 2. Constantly; 3. Practically. [c]

Simplicity of the plan of salvation.—

Oh! how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan:
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile;
From ostentation as from weakness free;
It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity,
Inscribed above the portal, from afar,
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul-quickening words—Believe and live. [d]

[b] *Gesenius.*

[c] *Dr. Thomas.*

vv. 12, 13. *J. H. B. Mountain*, 279.

v. 13. *J. Eyton*, i. 153; *G. Currey, Huls. Lec.* 1.

[d] *Cowper.*

"Great minds erect their never-failing trophies on the firm base of mercy."—*Massinger.*

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SEVENTH.

1—3. (1) **virgin daughter,** used of Tyre, ch. xxiii. 12; and referring to Babylon's boast that she had never been captured. [a] **no throne,** better, "sit on the ground throneless." **daughter . . Chaldæans,** Chaldæa being the country, and Babylon the capital. **tender and delicate,** [b] De. xxviii. 54. (2) **grind meal,** menial work. [c] **uncover,** *etc.*, descriptive of the miserable and shameful plight in wh. they would be who had once lived as princesses. Squalid and half clad. **over the rivers,** into exile. (3) **meet . . man,** *i.e.* allow no human relentings. [d]

A dreadful meeting (*v.* 3).—1. Men try to meet their enemies without warning—God gives men warning upon warning; 2. He does not meet his enemies in vengeance till He has exhausted every means to recover and reclaim them; 3. He never meets His enemies in vengeance without a sufficient cause: 4. He is not actuated by private resentments; 5. The result of the meeting cannot be doubtful; 6. He does not change His mind; 7. He does not leave the work unfinished. [e]

Note on v. 2.—To grind flour in the East is the work of servants or slaves, and to make it by pounding with a pestle and mortar is the office of female servants or slaves. There being but few bridges, those who are in a low condition are obliged to ford the rivers; hence may be seen large companies going to the opposite banks, who have been obliged to "make bare the leg" and to "uncover the thigh." Thus were the "tender and delicate" daughters of Babylon, who had been nurtured on a throne, to be reduced to the condition of menials, and to cross the rivers as people of the lowest degree. [f]

[a] "These words give the impression of a joyful welcome greeting, which meets

4, 5. **our redeemer,** a *v.* inserted parenthetically. [a] Our vindicator. (5) **silent . . darkness,** fig. for state of humiliation and captivity. **lady of kingdoms,** so called bec. of the number of tributary states over which she ruled.

[a] *Herodotus.*

[b] "Not so much descriptive of voluptuous and vicious habits, as of a delicate and easy mode of life, such as that of a princess compared with that of a female slave."—*J. A. Alexander.*

[c] "Grinding grain with a hand-mill was chiefly the labour of female slaves, and it was even regarded as the hardest labour."—*Nägelsbach.*

[d] "The evil was far too deep-seated; had been of far too long continuance. It was full time for vengeance to step in; for in no other way could the work of redemption be accomplished."—*Spk. Com.*

[e] *Dr. H. Humphrey.*

[f] *Roberts.*

one approaching, who is recognised as a friend."—*Nägelsbuch.*

"There are errors which no wise man will treat with rudeness while there is a probability that they may be the refraction of some great truth still below the horizon."—*Coleridge.*

"The main object of the Gospel is to establish two principles, the corruption of nature, and the redemption by Jesus Christ."—*Pascal.*

Longing for a Redeemer.—The worth of the unspeakable gift which in Christ is ours, is wonderfully testified by the fact that all should have been in one way or another either asking for that gift, or fancying that they had gotten it, or mourning its departure, or providing substitutes for it. For however in the one elect people, as the bearers of the Divine promises, as the central heart of the spiritual world, as the appointed interpreters to the rest of their blind desires, this longing after a Redeemer came out in greater clearness and in greater strength, and with no troubling disturbing elements—their education being far more directly from God, and being expressly aimed at the quickening of these longings to the highest—yet were those longings themselves not exclusively theirs. They, indeed, yearned, and knew what they yearned for; the nations yearned, and knew not for what. But still they yearned; for as the earth in its long polar night seeks to supply the absence of the day by the generation of the northern lights, so does each people in the long night of its heathen darkness bring forth in its yearning after the life of Christ, a faint and glimmering substitute for the same. From these dreamy longings after the break of day have proceeded oracles, priests, sacrifices, lawgivers, and the like. Men have nowhere given up hoping; nor acquiesced in the world's evil as the world's law. Everywhere they have had a tradition of a time when they were nearer to God than now, a confident hope of a time when they should be brought nearer again.[b]

6, 7, (6) **polluted**, better, profaned, suffered by chosen people to be treated as a common people, and to be defeated, and led captive. **thou**, Babylon. **the ancient**, or Israel in his old age.[a] Some think special reference is to the Bab. treatment of old men, and comp. La. iv. 16, v. 12. (7) **lady for ever**, having the sense of perfect security.[b] **latter end**, the certain ultimate consequences of such pride and cruelty.

The boast of Babylon (*v.* 7).—"I shall be a lady for ever," suggests that lengthened prosperity in the case of the ungodly leads to—1. False security; 2. Presumption, "in my own right;" 3. Boasting, "a lady superior to others;" 4. Self-satisfaction, "I am a lady now," etc.; 5. Abandonment to luxury, "I mean to be at ease;" 6. Spiritual blindness.[c]

Assumptions of pride.—

Ask for whose end the heavenly bodies shine;
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, 'tis for mine.
For me kind nature wakes her genial power,
Suckles each herb and spreads out every flower.
Annual for me, the grape, the rose, renew
The juice nectareous and the balmy dew;
For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies.[d]

8, 9. (8) **carelessly**, in uttermost security; with no suspicion of danger.[a] **widow**, exchanging the fig. of the virgin for that of the married woman. A State is a *widow* when without its king, and *childless* when its inhabitants are carried away captive. (9) **sorcerers**, *see* Da. ii. 2. **enchantments**, spells, or charms.

b Abp. Trench.

a Comp. 2 Kl. xxv. 5, 6, 26; Je. l. 17, li. 34.

b "Through thy vain expectation of being a queen for ever, thou didst advance to such a pitch of insolence as not to believe these things, concerning thy overthrow, possible."—*Fausset.*

c Stems and Twigs.

"Earthly pride is like the passing flower, that springs to fall, and blossoms but to die."—*H. K. White.*

d Pope.

a "According to Xenophon the Babylonians looked on Cyrus with contempt."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 8. *J. Barker*, i.

Sorceries, etc.—Moral and religious suggestions.—I. Credulity of unbelief: 2. Scepticism and superstition nearly allied; 3. Folly of believing in signs, omens, charms, and the like; 4. Wickedness of consulting conjurers, wizards, "the wise woman' and forsaking the "lively oracles;" 5. Even yet (1869) ignorant people of remote villages in Christian England believe in charms, and consult impostors.—*Practical hints.*—1. Do not countenance superstitious follies; 2. Have faith in God's Word and trust in His providence; 3. Men who harden themselves against the influences of the Spirit, and close their hearts against the Gospel, are often given over to a judicial blindness (Isa. lxiii. 10, *cf.* 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11; Jonah ii. 8). Hence spiritualism, and the like.[b]

Historical note on sorceries, etc.—1. At entrance of Christianity the world was overrun with magicians and conjurers of various grades (Gal. v. 20). "Impostors fr. the E., pretending to magical powers. had great influence over the Rom. mind. All the Gk. and Lat. literature of the period, fr. Horace to Lucian, abounds in proof of the prevalent credulity of this sceptical period. Unbelief, when it has become conscious of its weakness, is often glad to give its hand to superstition. The faith of educated Roms. was entirely gone, . . . they greedily welcomed the most absurd and degrading superstitions. . . . Syrian fortune-tellers "flocked into the haunts of public amusement. . . . The more remote districts of Asia Minor sent them itinerant sooth-sayers. . . . Marius had in his camp a Syrian prophetess, by whose divinations he regulated the progress of his campaigns." (Conybeare and Howson's Paul. i. 177—182.) Brutus, Pompey, Crassus, Cæsar resorted to oracles at Delphi, etc. Juvenal (x. 93) desc. the Emperor Tiberius with his Chaldæans around him. 2. Christianity attacked and defeated the popular superstition at all points of contact (Acts xiii. 8, xvi. 16, xix. 3, see esp. xix. 17—20). "This scene must have been long remembered at Ephesus. It was a strong proof of honest conviction on the part of the sorceress, and a striking attestation of the triumph of Jesus Christ over the powers of darkness" (*Ibid.* ii. 20).[c]

10, 11. (10) **perverted thee,** turned thee aside from the right. (11) **know . . riseth,** Heb. *the dawn thereof.* "Evil shall come on thee without the least previous intimation."[a] **put it off,**[b] or charm it away: or expiate it with all thy sacrificial oblations to thy gods.

False securities (*vv.* 11—15).—I. Look at this picture of utter and most painful bewilderment. This is the necessary and inevitable result of sin. 1. We have been warned of it; 2. A way of escape has been made. II. Hear the Divine challenge addressed to the false powers in which we have trusted, as money, chance, self-confidence, atheism. 1. They ought to be most useful when most needed; 2. They should show their sufficiency by their fearlessness. See text. (1) There is to be a great collision; (2) In that collision only the true can stand. III. See the doom of false securities. 1. Let no man complain of want of opportunity of estimating the value of his moral securities; 2. Let no man complain of having been allowed to live unwarned. Apply:—(1) We cannot escape the trial of our securities; (2) If we set ourselves against God, we challenge all the forces of His creation—fire, wind, flood, pestilence, etc.[c]

256; *Dr. V. Knox*, vi. 81; *W. T. Young*, i. 323.

b Topics.

"It is the nature of man to be proud. when man by nature has nothing to be proud of. He more adorneth the creature than adoreth the Creator; and makes not only his belly his god, but his body. I am ashamed of their glory whose glory is their shame. If nature will have me to be proud of something, I will be proud only of this, that I am proud of nothing."—*Warwick.*

"Ignorance is the curse of God, knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven."—*Shakespeare.*

c Topics.

a "With all thy magical arts thou shalt not be able to divine the dawning of that day—the day of thy own destruction,—nor the quarter from wh. it will arise. This was signally fulfilled. Bab. was taken by Cyrus in a night of revelry, when she was celebrating a religious anniversary, and was praising her gods, whom she imagined to have made her invincible and impregnable."—*Wordsworth.*

Conrade Pellican.—Conrade Pellican was born in Sweden, in 1478, and being the son of poor parents, they could render him but little assistance in his education. While pursuing his studies, during his youth, at Tubingen, the bookseller there purchased a small Hebrew Bible, which no one seemed anxious to possess. Pellican obtained a sight of it, and having persuaded his uncle to give him money enough to purchase it, thought himself exceedingly rich. He applied, in the middle of July, to study it, and by the end of the following October he had finished it, having selected the roots, and arranged the words in the manner of a concordance. This book was shown to the celebrated scholar Capnio, or Reuchlin, who expressed his astonishment, both at the work itself and the shortness of the time in which it had been done. This youth became one of the reformers.[d]

12, 13. (12) **stand now,** if you can. The language of irony. A scornful challenge to the multitude of Babylon's magicians. Persist, persevere with thy charms. **from thy youth,** with allusion to their claim to an extraordinarily early origin.[a] **if so be,** or perchance. (13) **wearied,** bec. their efforts are fruitless of results. **astrologers,** or diviners of the heavens. **star-gazers,** those who prophesy upon observation of the stars. **monthly,** *etc.*, esp. observant of changes of the moon.[b]

Astrology, etc.—The earliest objects of idolatrous homage were prob. the sun, moon, stars (2 K. xxiii. 5; Acts vii. 42), and afterwards earthly creatures (Ro. i. 23, 25). The following are among the chief, as ref. to in the Bible, of the creatures worshipped. [Sun] as *Osiris* by Egyptians, fr. them prob. learned by Israelites. On (Bethshemesh or Heliopolis = city of the S.), so called fr. his temple (Jer. xliii. 13). Wife of Joseph was dau. of his priest (Ge. xli. 45). Sun worshipped by Phœnicians under name of *Baal-shâmayim* (Lord of heaven), and *Adon* (Gk. Adonis), and *Thammuz* (Ez. viii. 14); by Ammonites as *Molech* or *Milcom*; by Moabites as *Chemosh*; by Syrians as *Hadad* (hence names Benhadad, Hadadezer, etc.) The Bel or Belus of Assyrians = Baal. As by Persians (*Bochart*), late kings of Judah dedicated horses to S. (2 K. xxiii. 11), [Moon] under name of *Astarte* worshipped by Phœnicians, known as *Ashtaroth* or Asthtoreth to Hebs. (Jud. ii. 13, x. 6; 1 S. vii. 3, xii. 10); goddess of Zidonians (1 K. xi. 33). [Stars.] Early adored by Israelites (Am. v. 26; Ac. vii. 42, 43; hence a strict law (Deu. xvii. 3), and constant calling of God as the true Jehovah *Zebaoth* (Lord of Hosts) (Dan. iv. 35, 37; Deu. x. 14). S. worship was encouraged by Manasseh (2 Ch. xxxiii. 3).[c]

Vain pretence of astrologers.—

> Augurs and soothsayers, astrologers,
> Diviners, and interpreters of dreams,
> I ne'er consult, and heartily despise;
> Vain their pretence to more than human skill:
> For gain, imaginary schemes they draw;
> Wand'rers themselves, they guide another's steps;
> And for poor sixpence promise countless wealth:
> Let them, if they expect to be believed,
> Deduct the sixpence, and bestow the rest.[d]

14, 15. (14) **fire,** of God's wrath, manifested in national calamities. **not a coal,** or cinder; all shall be reduced to ashes.

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b Avert by expiation.

c *Dr. Parker.*

v. 10. *G. Stephenson*, 340; *Bp. Kaye*, 313.

d *R. T. S.*

The Babylonians are reported by Diodorus Siculus, and other writers, to have carried back their own antiquity, as proved by recorded scientific observations, to an extravagant and foolish length."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b "It would appear that the astronomers of Babylon published a monthly table of the leading events that might be expected to happen."—*Henderson.*

v. 13. *J. C. Dieteric*, 598.

c *Topics.*

"How happy is he who can still hope to lift himself from this sea of error! What we know not, that we are anxious to possess, and cannot use what we know."—*Goethe.*

d *Ennius.*

"Astronomy is one of the sublimest fields of

(15) thus, *etc.*, so utterly worthless. merchants, traders in prognostications.

Note on v. 14.—It is very usual in the East to burn the stubble and the grass, in order to destroy the vermin. Thus Hanway, speaking of the inhabitants of the deserts of Tartary, says, "that they arrived in the desert in the first winter month, and that the inhabitants who live nearest to it often manure tracts of land by burning the grass, which grows very high." The words of our Saviour also allude to this, when He says, "Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven" Matt. vi. 30.[a]—*Burning the stubble.*—This is a strong description of a fire made with dried grass and stubble. While the hand of the cottager supplies fresh fuel, though but for a few moments, the flame may illumine his dwelling, and cheer himself with the blaze: but there is no fire to sit before, no coals to warm at. The embers wear but a momentary smile, and are then extinct. Thus has it fared with Babylon, against which these judgments were denounced, more than two thousand years since.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-EIGHTH.

1, 2. (1) waters of Judah, by the Orientals nations are often compared to rivers, of wh. the progenitors are the fountains.[a] not in truth, not sincerely.[b] (2) call . . city, speak of themselves as belonging to the holy city,[c] but where is their holiness?

Reasons against swearing.—We can conceive of no reason why a man should swear, but of ten reasons why he should not. 1. It is mean. A man of high moral standing would almost as soon steal a sheep as swear. 2. It is vulgar; altogether too low for a decent man. 3. It is cowardly: implying a fear either of not being believed or obeyed. 4. It is ungentlemanly. A gentleman, according to Webster, is a genteel man, well-bred, refined. Such a man will no more swear than go into the street and throw mud with a clodhopper. 5. It is indecent. Offensive to delicacy, and extremely unfit for human ears. 6. It is foolish. Want of decency is the want of sense. 7. It is abusive— to the mind that conceives the oath, to the tongue that utters it, and to the person at whom it is aimed. 8. It is venomous; showing a man's heart to be a nest of vipers, and every time he swears one of them sticks on his head. 9. It is contemptible; forfeiting the respect of the wise and good. 10. It is wicked; violating the Divine law, and provoking the displeasure of Him who will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Degradation of swearing.—It is no mark of a gentleman to swear. The most worthless and vile, the refuse of mankind, the drunkard and the prostitute, swear as well as the best dressed and educated gentleman. No particular endowments are requisite to give a finish to the art of cursing. The basest and meanest of mankind swear with as much tact and skill as the most refined: and he that wishes to degrade himself to the very lowest level of pollution and shame should learn to be a common swearer. Any man has talents enough to learn to curse God, and imprecate perdition on themselves and their fellow-men. Profane swearing never did any man any good. No man is the richer, or wiser, human investigation. The mind that grasps its facts and principles receives something of the enlargement and grandeur belonging to the science itself. It is a quickener of devotion."—*Mann.*

"Ignorance gives a sort of eternity to prejudice, and perpetuity to error."—*R. Hall.*

a Rosenmüller.

a "In this ch. Israel is warned against his old hardness of heart, and bidden to receive the declaration of that wh. is God's present will,—the deliverance of Israel through Cyrus. But, for the wicked, let Israel know there is no deliverance."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b Je. v. 2; Jno. iv. 24.

c Is. li. 1; Da. ix. 24; Ne. xii. 1; Mat. iv. 5, xxvii. 5.

This designation, at first a mere epithet, eventually became a proper name, and *Je-ha-Kodesh* seems, in some cases, to have superseded the more general name of Jerusalem. In other instances the two designations ran together; on some of the Heb. shekels the word

was *Jerusalem Kedoshah*, or *Ha Kedoshah*. The Mohammedans call Jerusalem *El Khoods* or The Holy.

d Louth.

a Is. xli. 24.

b Knobel.

c De. xxxi. 26—29.

d Dr. J. Bennett.

"I have always found in my scientific studies, that, when I could get the Bible to say anything upon the subject, it afforded me a firm platform to stand upon, and a round in the ladder by which I could safely ascend."—*Lieut. Maury.*

"I must confess to you that the majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me; the holiness of the Evangelists speaks to my heart, and has such strong and striking characters of truth, and is, moreover, so perfectly inimitable, that, if it had been the invention of men, the inventions would be greater than the greatest heroes."—*Rousseau.*

"Astronomy is the science of the harmony of infinite expanse."—*Lord John Russell.*

e R. T. S.

or happier for it. It helps no one's education or manners. It commends no one to any society. It is disgusting to the refined, abominable to the good; insulting to those with whom we associate; degrading to the mind; unprofitable, needless, and injurious to society; and wantonly to profane His name, to call His vengeance down, to curse Him, and to invoke His vengeance, is perhaps of all offences the most awful in the sight of God.[d]

3—5. (3) **former things**, such as the fall of Assyria.[a] **did them**, brought exactly to pass what had been prophesied. (4) **obstinate**, hard, stubborn, stiff-necked. **brow brass**, like the hard brow of butting animals.[b] Shamelessly persistent in opposition to the truth. (5) **lest**, *etc.*, Divine predictions were designed to be constant evidences of Divine workings.[c] **commanded them**, or ordered them into being.

The probability and use of inspired predictions (*v.* 3).—I. Is it quite plain that any being that is distinguished above others must be exalted, either by knowledge or by power, or by both? Hence God is known in this way, and chiefly by knowledge. II. The uses of inspired predictions. 1. That one should study the book that contains them; 2. You should watch His providence, to see how it fulfils His Word; 3. Learn from hence to admire and adore the omniscience and faithfulness of God; 4. Expect all that God has predicted, both for time and for eternity.[d]

A Leipsic Jew.—A poor student of the university of Leipsic, having occasion to undertake a journey to his distant friends, being destitute of the money needful for the purpose, was compelled to go to a Jew, and pawn his Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament. The latter contained the Greek and German text in opposite columns. The Jew, little as he valued this book, was prevailed on to give the student half a rix dollar for it. During the absence of the student, he determined to read it through, with a view of confirming his enmity against Jesus, and to be the better prepared to testify his zeal for the Jewish faith. He concealed it from his family, and commenced its perusal, which, as the young man was absent seven weeks, he had time to do. As he read, he was surprised and impressed, and at times was ready to exclaim, "Oh that Jesus was my Saviour!" When he had gone through the book, he was greatly perplexed and astonished that he had been able to find nothing to increase his hatred to Jesus, but had rather discovered much that was sublime and heavenly. He now charged himself with folly, and resolved to open the book no more. He adhered to this resolution for several days, but was soon compelled to peruse it a second time, with the determination to be more careful in ascertaining that Jesus and His Apostles had deserved the hatred of Jews in all ages. Still he was unable to find what he wished; while he was impressed with the consolation it imparted to the afflicted, and the immortality of glory it revealed, which seemed to remove the anxiety he had long felt on this subject. He was compelled a third time to read the book; and now the history, the doctrines, and the promises of Jesus destroyed his opposition, and melted his soul. He was overcome to tears, and resolved on embracing the doctrines of the cross. He announced his change to a Christian minister, purchased the New Testament of the student, to whom he became a warmly attached friend, and continued to give evidence of being a consistent Christian.[e]

6—8. (6) heard, see, heard the predictions, now see the fulfilments. declare it, so that others may learn of the true and only God. new things, those concerning Cyrus. hidden things, things kept in reserve. (7) created now, by immediate Divine decree. God not only arranging from the beginning, but actually presiding and working now.[a] (8) heardest not, by reason of hardheartedness and obstinacy.[b]

Defects of believers (*v.* 8).—I. They are too often in a measure spiritually insensible, "Yea, thou heardest not." II. They are often carelessly ignorant, "Yea, thou knewest not." III. Yet all this was foreknown of God, and yet He has been pleased to deal with us in a way of mercy. IV. Pray for the Holy Spirit, that we may henceforth have the hearing ear and the understanding heart.[c]

The wisdom of God in hiding events—The chasm in the rock.—There is a mountain pass in Switzerland over which the traveller is conducted blindfold. He might lose his footing if he caught but one bewildering glimpse of the chasm below. In like manner a wise love conceals from us those circumstances that might distract our attention from the immediate line of duty, and withholds the knowledge that might occasion bewilderment and a fall.[d]

9—11. (9) defer mine anger, Ex. xxxiv. 6.[a] refrain, from adequately punishing them for their stubbornness and rebellion.[b] (10) refined thee, by the chastising fires of captivity. with silver, better. *as silver.*[c] (11) name . . polluted, or defamed. as it would be if God proved unfaithful to His chosen people. glory . . another, ch. xlii. 8.

Chastisement sent in love.—

I saw the young bride, in her beauty and pride,
Bedecked in her snowy array ;
And the bright flush of joy mantled high on her cheek,
And the future looked blooming and gay ;
And with woman's devotion she laid her fond heart
At the shrine of celestial love ;
And she anchored her hopes to this perishing earth,
By the chain which her tenderness wove.
But I saw when those heart-strings were bleeding and torn,
And the chain had been severed in two,
She had changed her white robes for the sables of grief,
And her bloom to the paleness of woe.
But the Healer was there, pouring balm on her heart,
And wiping the tears from her eyes :
And He strengthened the chain He had broken in twain,
And fastened it firm to the skies.
There had whisper'd a voice—'twas the voice of her God—
I love thee, I love thee ;—pass under the rod !

I saw the young mother in tenderness bend
O'er the couch of her slumbering boy ;
And she kissed the soft lips as they murmured her name,
While the dreamer lay smiling in joy.
Oh ! sweet as the rosebud encircled with dew,
When its fragrance is flung on the air,
So bright and so fresh to the mother he seemed,
As he lay in his innocence there.

a "The things wh. the Prophet prophesied concerning Babylon and Cyrus could not, by any possibility, have been anticipated by human sagacity."—*Henderson.*

b De. xxix. 4, xxxi. 27.

c *C. H. Spurgeon.*

"He who trusts a secret to his servant makes his own man his master." — *Dryden.*

d *C. Stanford.*

a A beautiful exhibition of the forbearance of Jehovah.

b Ps. lxxviii. 38.

c "The refiner of silver may lose some grains of the good ore in the smelting, but I will not lose a single grain of thee in the spiritual process of refining thee by the furnace of affliction at Babylon."— *Wordsworth.*

v. 9. *Dr. H. Draper*, i. 516.

v. 10. *G. Whitefield*, 687 ; *J. Morton*, ii. 309.

"The afflictions of God's Church and people are short, not simply of themselves, for many times they last long ; but in comparison of the glory that is hereafter to be revealed, they are short ; they are not short to sense, but to faith they are so. If we look unto this life, our afflictions are

long; but if we look to eternity and the glory that is hereafter to be revealed, they are indeed short, and last but for a moment. Faith apprehends God's favour, presence and grace in the sharpest trials, and expects the accomplishment of God's promise in giving a happy issue unto them."—*S. Smith.*

"Even legal punishments lose all appearance of justice when too strictly inflicted on men compelled by the last extremity of distress to incur them."—*Junius.* re. 13, 14. *E. W. Whitaker*, ii. 199.

d Dana.

"The manner in which the Creator has contrived a supply for the thirst of man, in sultry places, is worthy of admiration. He has placed amidst the burning sands of Africa a plant, whose leaf, twisted round like a cruet, is always filled with a large glassful of fresh water. The gullet of this cruet is shut by the extremity of the leaf itself, so as to prevent the water from evaporating. He has planted, in some other districts of the same country, a great tree, called by the negroes Boa, the trunk of which, of a prodigious bulk, is naturally hollowed, like a cis-

But I saw when she gazed on the same lovely form,
Pale as marble, and silent, and cold,
But paler and colder her beautiful boy,
And the tale of her sorrow was told.
But the Healer was there, who had smitten her heart
And taken her treasure away;
To allure her to heaven, He had placed it on high,
And the mourner will sweetly obey:
There had whisper'd a voice—'twas the voice of her God—
I love thee, I love thee;—pass under the rod!

I saw when a father and mother had leaned
On the arms of a dear cherished son;
And the star in the future grew bright in their gaze,
As they saw the proud place he had won;
And the fast-coming evening of life promised fair,
And its pathway grew smooth to their feet;
And the star-light of love glimmered bright at the end,
And the whispers of fancy were sweet.
But I saw when they stood bending low o'er the grave,
Where their hearts' dearest hope had been laid:
And the star had gone down in the darkness of night,
And joy from their bosoms had fled.
But the Healer was there, and His arms were around,
And He led them with tenderest care;
And He showed them a star in the bright upper world,
'Twas their star shining brilliantly there!
They had each heard a voice—'twas the voice of their God—
I love thee, I love thee;—pass under the rod![d]

12, 13. (12) first, *etc.*, ch. xli. 4, xliv. 6; Re. i. 17, xxii. 13. (13) my right hand, or, the palm of My right hand. As if with the palm God had smoothed out the heavens.

Design in creation.—A gentleman who had discarded the thought of Deity from his mind, while travelling in Australia was led in a remarkable way to a belief in His existence. His own account of it is as follows: "Journeying on a day as close and sultry as can well be imagined, I became, after some hours' travel, so weary, that at length I cast myself down beneath the most shady tree I could find, unable to hold out any longer, and determined to await the cool of the evening. As I lay thus, after some time I saw the seed-stem of a little plant, close before me, move in the slightest degree several times, each time accompanying the motion with a single low, sharp sound, like the tick of a watch. Interested to discover the connection between the motion and the sound, I leaned over and examined it. It was a small plant, with a short and more than proportionably thick flower-stem, having a single seed-pod at the extremity. The seed-pod was an oblate spheroid, not much larger than a garden-pea: but it was composed of a number of sections, which, shrinking as it ripened, separated themselves from one another: and, finally, each section detached itself at the bottom of the stalk, which ran right through to the upper side, and sprang out, nearly straightening itself; so that eventually, when all the sections had extended themselves, it would be something like an open umbrella. But to the extremity of each of these sections, before it sprang out, on the inside was attached a single small round seed, which was

cast, by the spring of the section to which it belonged, to a considerable distance. I struck the stem lightly, and thus artificially expedited the process of disjunction, and found that the seeds were thrown out upwards of two feet. On paying close attention to the plant itself, I observed that its stem was so stiff, that the wind could have no power to sway it to and fro, and thus scatter the seed; so low, likewise, that, amidst the surrounding grass, the wind would scarcely ever reach it in force sufficient to carry the seed away; and, lastly, that it was placed in the midst of leaves all spreading upwards and outwards in a funnel form from the root, so that, if the seed were not cast beyond them, they would catch and carry it back again to the bosom of the plant itself. The disadvantage, then, was threefold, and so complete in the whole as to bar this little fraction of nature from the performance of one of its grand generic offices,—that of properly depositing its seeds. Nothing could relieve it but some mechanical contrivance; and here was that mechanical contrivance; and not only was it a contrivance in itself, but there was design and adaptation in fixing the very juncture of its operations. The seed should not be thrown off till it was ripe; and, till it was so ripe that its very reservoir began to separate into fragments, this mechanical contrivance could not act. The completion of the ripening process was the condition on which the contrivance for scattering the seed depended for coming into action. It was an instance of design and contrivance so indisputable, that there was no leaving it to be accounted for in any way but by the agency of a God."[a]

14, 15. (14) all ye, *i.e.* all nations.[a] loved him, *i.e.* Cyrus. Love so far as shown in selecting him as His agent. Not personal affection. (15) I, notice the emphatic repetition of this pronoun.

A special Providence—Major-General Burn.—General Burn records, in his Life, the following interesting facts:—Last week, just as my heart was poring over the disappointment I met with in my expected promotion, and anticipating all the miseries of accumulating debt, a dear friend of mine, in the military profession, called upon me; and, taking me aside into a private room, made me promise I would ask him no questions, which when I had done, with some hesitation, he put a bank-note into my hand, saying, he was desired to give it me, but with the strongest injunctions never to divulge from whence it came. I put it into my pocket without looking at it, repeatedly thanking him and my generous benefactor for the very acceptable present. Dinner being upon the table, we went in, sat down, and dined; my mind all the while occupied about which of my creditors I should pay off first, imagining I had perhaps a ten or twenty pound note, which I longed to look at, but was ashamed to do so before my friend. Soon after dinner, I took an opportunity to step out of the room to satisfy my anxious curiosity. But, oh! how was my heart filled with grateful emotions when I found two notes, one of five, and the other of a hundred pounds—a present of a hundred guineas! To attempt a description of my feelings at that time would be in vain: those who have experienced the overflowings of a grateful heart can only guess at them. I was so overcome with a view of the Lord's goodness, that I knew not how to express myself, and was afraid my friend would think me insensible of the favour bestowed. When he was gone, and I

tern. In the rainy season it receives its fill of water, which continues fresh and cool in the greatest heats, by means of the tufted foliage which crowns its summit. In some of the parched rocky islands of the West Indies there is found a tree, called the Water Lianno, so full of sap that if you cut a single branch of it, as much water is immediately discharged as a man can drink at a draught, and it is perfectly pure and limpid."—*St. Pierre.*

a Dr. Leifchild.

a "Once more the nations are challenged to say wh. of their deities has foretold the work that the Lord has willed to perform on Babylon."—*Spk. Com.*

"Thou great mysterious Power, who hast involved Thy wise decrees in darkness, to perplex the pride of human wisdom, to confound the daring scrutiny, and prove the faith of Thy presuming creatures!"—*Hannah More.*

"O Eternal Providence, whose course, amidst the various maze of life, is fix'd by boundless wisdom and by boundless love, I follow Thee with resignation,

hope, with confidence and joy; for Thou art good, and of Thy rising goodness is no end."—*Thomson.*

b R. T. S.

had communicated the purport of his visit to Mrs. B., we both wept, and in broken accents, with eyes and hearts directed to heaven, expressed our obligation to the God of all our mercies for His seasonable and ample supply, in answer to our united and repeated prayers. I have now enjoyed the pleasure of paying all my debts, of contributing to the relief of others, and of purchasing many articles absolutely necessary to my family. Oh, how good the Lord has been to us, unworthy as we are of the least of all His mercies![b]

16, 17. (16) his Spirit, the spirit of prophecy in Isaiah.[a] (17) teacheth . . profit, though it may be in the furnace of affliction.

Profitable teaching and right leading (*v.* 17).—The whole scope of the passage points to God—I. As a Redeemer—1. From the captivity of evil, the Babylon of sin; 2. The mercy of the Redeemer at work in the city of bondage. II. As a teacher. 1. Look at the Gospel as a teacher; 2. Learning is never easy, yet all the teaching is profitable. III. As a leader. 1. The way God would have us go is not always according to our inclination; 2. The knowledge that it is His way should be enough.[b]

The ways of God.—In this world we are children standing on the bank of a mighty river. Casting our eyes upward and downward along the channel, we discern various windings of its current; and perceive that it is now visible, now obscure, and now entirely hidden from our view. But being far removed from the fountain whence it springs, and from the ocean into which it is emptied, we are unable to form any conceptions of the beauty, usefulness, or grandeur of its progress. Lost in perplexity and ignorance, we gaze, wonder, and despond. In this situation, a messenger from heaven comes to our relief, with authentic information of its nature, its course, and its end; conducts us backward to the fountain, and leads us forward to the ocean. This river is the earthly system of providence: the Bible is the celestial messenger: and Heaven is the ocean in which all preceding dispensations find their end.[c]

18, 19. (18) peace, or national prosperity. river, constantly and steadily flowing. righteousness, moral prosperity. waves, which roll up and flow on continually.[a] (19) seed . . sand, abundant offspring being regarded in the E. as a special sign of Divine favour. name, as Jehovah's nation.

The commandments of God (*v.* 18).—I. God hath given to us commandments—1. Authoritative in their import; 2. Perspicuous in their style: 3. Universal in their application; 4 Reasonable in their claims. II. God's commandments deserve attention. 1. They should be read; 2. Remembered; 3. Practised. III. Such attention produces the happiest results. 1. The nature of that tranquillity which the people of God enjoy; 2. Its perpetuity; 3. Its increase; 4. Thy righteousness as the waves of the sea. IV. The people of Israel were inattentive to God's commandments. This conduct was—1. Ungrateful; 2. Rebellious; 3. Unnatural; 4. Ruinous. Learn—(1) That attention to God's commandments is a highly important duty; (2) Where they are disregarded, peace is forfeited; (3) God most compassionately commiserates the circumstances of His creatures; (4) Man's final ruin is wholly of himself.[b]

"In this *v.* the Prophet, charged with these messages from God, speaks in his own name, and testifies to his countrymen that he has from the beginning pointed out to them God's hand and beck in these great events now happening."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b J. Parrish, B.A.

v. 16. *Dr. T. Dwight*, iii.

"The one sign of a thorough knowledge is the power of teaching."—*Aristotle.*

c Dr. Dwight.

a Comp. De. xxxii. 29; Mat. xxiii. 37.

b Beta in 400 Sks.

v. 18. *M. Jackson*, i. 40; *C. Bradley*, i. 392.

"The reason why we hate the law," said some idolaters to a missionary, "is because it is holy. If it would allow us to rob freely, if it taught us to be revenged of our enemies, and give way to our passions without being exposed to their consequences, we

The dying Indian boy.—I found him dying of consumption, and in a state of the most awful poverty and destitution, in a small birch-rind covered hut, with nothing but an old blanket over him. After recovering from my surprise, I said, "My poor boy, I am very sorry to see you in this state; had you let me know, you should not have been lying here." He replied, "It is very little I want now, and these poor people get it for me; but I should like something softer to lie upon, as my bones are very sore." I then asked him concerning the state of his mind, when he replied that he was very happy; that Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, had died to save him, and that he had the most perfect confidence in Him. Observing a small Bible under the corner of his blanket, I said, "Jack, you have a friend there." Weak as he was, he raised himself on his elbow, held it in his attenuated hand, while a smile played on his countenance, and slowly spoke, in precisely the following words:—"This, sir, is my dear friend. You gave it me. For a long time I read it much, and often thought of what it told. Last year I went to see my sister at Lake Winnipeg (about two hundred miles off), where I remained about two months. When I was halfway back through the lake I remembered that I had left my Bible behind me. I directly turned round, and was nine days by myself, tossing to and fro, before I could reach the house; but I found my friend, and determined that I would not part with it again, and ever since it has been near my breast, and I thought I should have buried it with me; but I have thought since I had better give it to you when I am gone, and it may do some one else good." He was often interrupted by a sepulchral cough, and sunk down exhausted. I read and prayed, the hut hardly affording me room to be upright even when kneeling.

20—22. (20) **flee ye**, as at the Exodus. **singing**, as when you reached the further shores of the Red Sea.[a] (21) **thirsted not**, comp. the experiences of the wilderness journey from Egypt with those of the wilderness journey from Babylon. For both God graciously provides.[b] (22) **no peace**, as before, in the sense of national prosperity through the Divine blessing.

Peace (*v.* 22).—I. What kind of peace? "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." II. How shall we get it? "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." III. What will be the effect of it? "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." IV. Where will it lead us? "Unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, to God, the Judge of all, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant." "Seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace."

Peace of a believer.—The believer's peace is like a river for continuance. Look at it, rising as a little brook among the mosses of the lone green hill: by-and-by it leaps as a rugged cataract; anon it flows along that fair valley where the red deer wanders, and the child loves to play. With hum of pleasant music the brook turns the village mill. Hearken to its changeful tune as it ripples over its pebbly bed, or leaps adown the wheel, would embrace it; but because it is holy we reject it, and command you and the catechist to depart immediately."

"During our prosperity, and while things flow agreeably to our desire, we ought with great care to avoid pride and arrogance; for, as it discovers weakness not to bear adversity with equanimity, so also with prosperity. Equanimity, in every condition of life, is a noble attribute."—*Cicero.*

"Peace is the happy, natural state of man; war his corruption, his disgrace."—*Thomson.*

a Ex. xix. 4, 5, 6.

b "God always connects the mercies of the Exodus from Babylon with those of the Exodus from Egypt."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 22. *Dr. J. A. Buffield*, ii. 405.

"He who rightly understands the laws that govern the material world can predict with utmost certainty when eclipses shall take place, when old ocean shall overflow its boundaries, or when another comet shall sway the vaulted heavens. So a man's destiny. Tell us the moral principles that reign

over a man's soul, and we will predict his condition a thousand years, ay, a thousand ages, hence, unless these principles are eradicated."—*Homilist.*

"When you look at the believer's busy life, you may see no trace of his peace of soul. But you know that ocean, under the hurricane, is lashed into those huge waves and that wild foam only on the surface. Not very far down, the waters are still as an autumn noon; there is not a ripple, or breath, or motion. And so, if we had the faith we ought, though there might be ruffle upon the surface of our lot, we should have the inward peace of perfect faith in God. Amid the dreary noises of this world; amid its cares and tears; amid its hot contentions, ambitions, and disappointments, we should have an inner calm like the serene ocean depths, to which the influence of the wild winds and waves above can never come!"—*Anon.*

• *C. H. Spurgeon.*

or sports in eddies where the trees bend down their branches to kiss the current. Anon the streamlet has become a river, and bears upon its flood full many a craft. Then its bosom swells, bridges with noble arches span it, and, grown vaster still, it becomes an estuary, broad enough to be an arm of old Father Ocean, pouring its water-floods into the mighty main. The river abides the lapse of ages, it is no evanescent morning cloud, or transient rain-flood, but in all its stages it is permanent.

"Men may come, and men may go,
But I flow on for ever."

Evermore, throughout all generations, the river speedeth to its destined place. Such is the peace of the Christian. He has always reason for comfort. He has not a consolation like a swollen torrent which is dried up under the hot sun of adversity, but peace is his rightful possession at all times. Do you inquire for the Thames? You shall find it flowing in its own bed in the thick black night as well as in the clear bright day. You shall discover the noble river when it mirrors the stars or sends back the sheen of the moon, as well as when multitudes of eyes gaze upon the pompous pageantry of civic procession at midday. You may see its waves in the hour of tempest by the lightning's flash, as well as in the day of calm when the sun shineth brightly on them. Ever is the river in its place. And even thus, come night, come day, come sickness, come health, come what will, the peace of God which passeth all understanding will keep the Christian's heart and mind, through Jesus Christ. Nor must we exclude the idea of progress. You can leap the Thames at Cricklade, for the tiny brook is spanned by a narrow plank, across which laughing village girls are tripping: but who thinks of laying down a plank at Southend, or at Grays? No, the river has grown—how deep? At the mouth of it, comparable to the sea—how broad? There go the ships, and even leviathan might play therein. Such is the Christian's peace. At the first, little temptations avail to mar it, and the troubles of life threaten to evaporate it. Be not dismayed, but quietly wait. When the Christian is somewhat grown, and has wandered for awhile along the tortuous course of a gracious experience, his peace will gather force like a flowing stream. Wait twenty or thirty years, till he has traversed yonder rich lowlands of fellowship with Christ in His sufferings and conformity to His death, and you shall mark that the believer's rest will be like a river, deep and broad, for he shall know the peace which was our Master's precious legacy; and he will cast all his care upon God, who careth for him. True peace will increase till it melts into the eternal rest of the beatific vision, where

"Not a wave of trouble rolls
Across the peaceful breast."•

CHAPTER THE FORTY-NINTH.

1. O isles, or, O My people scattered among the isles.[a] called me, the personal servant of God. The greater than Cyrus, whom he, in measure, typified.

Signs of election.—Make your calling sure, and by that your election; for, that being done, this follows of itself. We are not

[a] "The Messiah is the speaker."—*Henderson.*

"If there be not a religious ele-

to pry immediately into the decree, but to read it in the performance. Though the mariner sees not the polestar, yet the needle of the compass, which points to it, tells him which way he sails; thus the heart which is touched with the loadstone of Divine love, trembling with godly fear, and yet still looking towards God by fixed believing, points at the love of election, tells the soul that its course is heavenward, towards the haven of eternal rest. He that loves may be sure that he was loved first, and he that chooses God for his delight and portion may conclude, confidently, that God hath chosen him to be one of those that shall enjoy Him, and be happy in Him for ever; for that our love and electing of Him is but the return of the beams of His love shining upon us.[b]

2, 3. (2) **my mouth,** Messiah's work would be teaching. **sharp sword,** He. iv. 12. **shaft,** or arrow.[a] **hid me,** with reference to the concealment of the Divine Redeemer previous to His manifestation in the flesh.[b] **quiver . . hid,** protected by God as the arrow by the quiver. (3) **O Israel,** this new "servant of God," standing as a new federal Head. **glorified,** Jno. xii. 28.[c]

Simplicity of the Gospel.—To meet any mental deficiency in man, while the truth itself is simple, it is taught in the Bible under such simple metaphors, that none can say they cannot understand it. How simple is the metaphor of the brazen serpent, held up before the snake-bitten Israelites, while they are commanded to look and live. Who does not understand that a look at Christ, who dies in the stead of men, will make them live? "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." Who does not understand the figure of a fountain flowing in the streets, that every thirsty passer-by may put his lips down and drink? "Behold the Lamb of God." Who does not understand the sacrifice? Here is a lamb killed for the sin of Israel, and so Christ dies for the sin of those who believe in Him. The act of faith is simple, the object of faith is plain; the metaphors make it clear, and he is without excuse who does not understand the Gospel of Christ.[d]

4. laboured . . nought, descriptive of the apparent results of Messiah's mission.[a] Christ made comparatively few disciples, and seemed to make but little impression on the Jewish nation. **judgment,** or reward, the true fruitage of My work.

The ineffectiveness of Christ's personal ministry a man-revealing fact (v. 4).—I. It reveals man's freedom of action. Christ appealed to—1. Belief; 2. Conscience; 3. Interest. II. It reveals man's perversity of character. 1. Of judgment; 2. Of feeling; 3. Of life. III. It reveals man's exclusive support in his highest labours. 1. The cause in which we are engaged is the cause of God; 2. The reward of our efforts is from God.[b]

Opposition to the Gospel.—The colporteurs often have anything but a quiet time of it in some of the country districts of France. Not only are evil reports spread against them, but they are threatened, insulted, and ill-treated; all sorts of evil stories are told of their books; and sometimes at the close of the day, when utterly worn out, they have found themselves unable to procure a meal or shelter for the night, the priest having gone to the cruel extreme of compelling every innkeeper, under pain of

ment in the relations of men, such relations are miserable, and doomed to ruin."—*Carlyle.*

"The measure of choosing well is whether a man likes what he has chosen."—*Lamb.*

b Leighton.

a "The metaphors of a sword and an arrow, in the best state of preparation, aptly set forth the penetrating and subduing efficacy of the Gospel."—*Henderson.*

b "Keeping me, until the 'fulness of time,' within the mystery of the Divine Counsel."—*Spk. Com.*

c Jno. xiii. 31, xiv. 13, xvii. 1, 4.

v. 2. *R. Robinson,* ii. 153.

v. 3. *J. Fraser,* 126.

d C. H. Spurgeon.

a Comp. Jno. i. 11, xii. 37. "Here it seems to point to the obstinacy of the Jews, among whom Christ went in person preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, laboured and spent His strength, and yet the rulers and the body of the nation rejected Him and His doctrine; so very few were brought in, when one would think none should have stood out."—*Mat. Henry.*

b Dr. Thomas.

excommunication, to deny them all accommodation. A colporteur lately returned to his lodgings after a hard day's work, and was received very coldly by the landlady, who told him that the priest had threatened that if she continued to lodge so dangerous a man as a colporteur she would be utterly ruined. She accordingly begged her lodger to leave; and though he argued with her, and showed her how wrong it was to drive him out, the woman was so frightened by the threats of the priest that he had to go. Another colporteur was driven away one night from every inn where he showed his face; and although the weather was very rough, he was positively obliged to spend the night under a tree, seated on the wallet in which he carried his books.[c]

v. 4. *Dr. P. Doddridge*, iv. 60; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iii. 284.

"The fruit derived from labour is the sweetest of all pleasures."—*Vaucenargues.*

c Gleanings for the Young.

5. **though . . gathered**, better, "that Israel may be gathered *to Him.*"[a] The work of the "servant of Jehovah" was the conversion of Israel, but if He seemed to fail in this He would really accomplish a more glorious work. **yet**, *etc.*, better, "for I am glorious," etc. **my strength**, or My salvation.

Titles of God.—When Alexander, the son of Philip, was at Babylon, he sent for a priest from every country and nation which he had vanquished, and assembled them together in his palace. Then he sat down on his throne, and asked them, saying, "Tell me, do you acknowledge and worship a supreme invisible Being?" Then all the priests bowed their heads, and answered, "Yea, O king!" And the king asked again, "By what name do you call this Being?" Then the priest from India answered, "We call it Brahma, which signifieth the Great." The priest from Persia said, "We call it Ormus: that is, the Light." The priest from Judæa said, "We call it Jehovah Adonai, the Lord which is, which was, and is to come." Thus each priest had a peculiar word and particular name by which he designated the Supreme Being. Then the king was wroth in his heart, and said, "You have only one lord and king, henceforth you shall have only one God, Zeus is his name." Then the priests were grieved at the saying of the king, and spake, "Our people always called Him by the name we have proclaimed, from their youth up: how, then, may we change it?" But the king was yet more wroth. Then an old sage stood forth, a Brahmin, who had accompanied him to Babylon, and said, "Will it please my lord the king, that I speak unto this assembly?" Then he turned to the priests, and said, "Doth not the celestial daystar, the source of earthly light, shine upon every one of you?" Then all the priests bowed their heads, and answered, "Yea!" Then the Brahmin asked them, one by one, "How do you call it?" And each priest told him a different word and a peculiar name, according to his own country and nation. Then the Brahmin said to the king, "Shall they not henceforth call the daystar by one name? *Helios* is His name." At these words, the king was ashamed, and said, "Let them each use their own word: for I perceive that the name and the image constitute not the being."[b]

a So marg., Sept., Syr., Arab., Delitzsch, etc.

To restore Jacob to Him, and that Israel may be gathered to Him. "With joyful emotion the servant repeats the facts that had served as the basis of his hope, and now after a momentary shaking prove to be actually steadfast."—*Nägelsbach.*

"All things in the natural world symbolise God, yet none of them speak of Him but in broken and imperfect words. High above all He sits, sublimer than mountains, grander than storms, sweeter than blossoms and tender fruits, nobler than lords, truer than parents, more loving than lovers. His feet tread the lowest places of the earth; but His head is above all glory; and everywhere He is supreme."—*Beecher.*

b Krummacher.

6. **light things**, *i.e.* compared with the sublime trust committed to Messiah of saving the whole world.[a] **preserved**, *marg.* "desolations:" the spared of so many national calamities. **light**, *etc.*, comp. Lu. ii. 32; Ac. xiii. 47; Ro. xv. 10.[b]

The Messiah's commission (*v.* 6).—I. God's gift to mankind.

a "Israel had come to look on itself as possessed of exclusive privileges; a view altogether derogatory to God's glory. Even to

1. The Person given; 2. The Saviour's appointment, office, or undertaking. II. God's intention respecting mankind. 1. To raise up the tribes of Jacob; 2. The enlightening of the Gentiles. We infer—(1) We ought very highly to value our own souls; (2) We should accept the salvation of God; (3) Love Him who has manifested such love to us; (4) Give proof of our love; (5) Confidently expect all things that are necessary to life and godliness; (6) Employ both our example and influence to open the eyes of our fellow-men.[c]

Life in light.—What is light? It is "life." It is Christ Himself: He is the Light: you shall have Him; and having Him, you shall find that your soul lives because of Him; that in secret, and by a course which you trace not, something is given to your soul which makes it live; live as it never lived before; live a new, a higher, a Divine life; live a life inside and above this life; a life independent of chance and change, independent of kindness or unkindness, of love or coldness, from those around you; independent of time and sense, of circumstances and possessions: because hidden in God, where Christ Himself is, at the right hand of God. "And when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." "I am the Light of the world: and he that followeth Me shall have the light of life."[d]

7. **man despiseth,** *lit.* "whom the soul despiseth."[a] An object of abomination or disgust. **nation abhorreth,**[b] the Jewish nation, as such, rejected Messiah. **servant of rulers,** as rendering perfect obedience to the constituted authorities of His day.[c] **and arise,** *i.e.* to do homage to the great King-Saviour.[d]

Christ's future reign (*v.* 7).—I. The representation which is here given of the Messiah: note the description given of Him; this is the character of Christ, it is His character to this day. II. The determination of God respecting Him; He has decreed that all shall bow to His sceptre, for this He pledges the veracity of His word. Learn—1. What a glorious period is approaching; 2. What encouragement have all ministers; 3. How happy are all believers.[e]

Millennium, its blessedness.—

They come from the ends of the earth,
White with its aged snows:
From the bounding breast of the tropic tide,
Where the day-beam ever glows;
From the east, where first they dwelt,
From the north, and the south, and the west,
Where the sun puts on his robe of light,
And lays down his crown to rest.

Out of every land they come;
Where the palm triumphant grows,
Where the vine overshadows the roofs and the hills,
And the gold-orbed orange glows;
Where the olive and fig tree thrive,
And the rich pomegranates red,
Where the citron blooms, and the apple of ill
Bows down its fragrant head.

re-establish Israel in its entirety would have been a small thing; but—how few were the *preserved of Israel* who survived the successive national judgments."—*Spk. Com.*

b Is. xlii. 6, 7, lx. 3; Mat. xxviii. 18, 19.

v. 6. *Dr. T. Gale*, 369; *J. Bilstone*, 61; *Dr. H. Pearson*, 103; *T. Ainger*, 261.

c Zeta in 400 Sks.

d Dr. C. J. Vaughan.

a "Despised by the mere animal passion of man, which judges according to the outward appearance; and is therefore carnal, and not spiritual."—*Wordsworth.*

b "The Jews contemptuously always call Jesus *Tolvi*, the crucified."—*Fausset.*

c Comp. Mat. xvii. 27, xxvi. 52, 53.

d "Kings being usually seated in the presence of others, are described as rising from their thrones; while princes and nobles, who usually stand in the presence of their sovereigns, are described as falling prostrate."—*Hitzig.*

e C. Simeon, M.A.

"One song employs all nations; and all cry, 'Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain for us!' The dwellers in the

vales and on the rocks shout to each other, and the mountain-tops from distant mountains catch the flying joy; till, nation after nation taught the strain, earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round."—*Cowper.* "The future does not come from before to meet us, but comes streaming up fr. behind over our heads."—*Rahel.*

"Educate men without religion, and you make them but clever devils."—*Duke of Wellington.*

f **Bailey.**

From the lands where the gems are born,
Opal and emerald bright:
From shores where the ruddy corals grow,
And pearls with their mellow light;
Where silver and gold are dug,
And the diamond rivers roll,
And the marble, white as the still **moonlight,**
Is quarried, and jetty coal;—

They come—with a gladdening **shout;**
They come—with a tear of joy;
Father and daughter, youth and **maid,**
Mother and blooming boy.
A thousand dwellings they leave,
Dwellings—but not a home;
To them there is none but the sacred **soil,**
And the land whereto they come.

And the Temple again shall be built,
And filled as it was of yore:
And the burden be lift from the **heart of the world,**
And the nations all adore;
Prayers to the throne of heaven
Morning and eve shall rise,
And *unto* and not *of* the Lamb
Shall be the sacrifice.*f*

8, 9. (8) **acceptable time,**[a] a suitable time for showing grace or favour.[b] The period of the New Dispensation. **covenant** . . **people,** ch. xlii. 6. **establish,** *etc.*, metaphors borrowed from nomadic life. "To raise up the earth from its present state of ruin, and to cause to inherit the moral wastes of heathenism."[c] (9) **prisoners,** first, exiled and captive Israelites, then those in spiritual bondage. **ways,** or roads along which led. **pastures** . . **places,**[d] *comp.* ch. xli. 17, 18. The fig. is taken from the shepherd leading home his flock.

The greatness of Christ's salvation (*vv.* 8—10).—I. The promised diffusion of the Gospel. 1. This was begun in the Apostolic age; 2. It is still existing; 3. It will be fully achieved in the millennium. II. The felicity of those who shall embrace it. Here is assured—1. Provision; 2. Protection; 3. Guidance; 4. Refreshment.[e]

The greatness of Christ.—Christ is all; He is the great all; heaven and earth, time and eternity, grace and glory, are all one in Christ. Do you want life? "He that hath the Son hath life." Do you want grace? Close with Christ, and He will give you grace—abundance of grace. Do you want peace? Christ will give you peace. Do you want strength and righteousness, for justification and sanctification? Close with Christ, and He will supply you with abundance of both. O my soul, why standest thou off from Him? Is there any can give thee life, peace, pardon, but He? Hadst thou rather perish in thine own poverty, than come to this treasury to be enriched?*f*

10—12. (10) **hunger,** *etc.*, Re. vii. 16. Still keeping up the fig. of the flock as led by the shepherd, with the most tender and patient care. **heat,** of burning sand, and burning sunshine. **lead** . . **guide,** *comp.* Ps. xxiii.[a] (11) **mountains,** fig. for

a 2 Cor. vi. 2.

b "The object of address is still Messiah and His people, whose great mission is again described."—*J. A. Alexander.*

c "Colonise the waste wilderness of heathenism with inhabitants, who will inherit it in successive generations."—*Wordsworth.*

d On even the bare hill tops.

e 8. *J. Hill*, 41; *W. Gilpin*, 1.

e *C. Simeon, M.A.*

f *E. Pearse.*

a "Messiah will abundantly satisfy all the wants, both of literal Israel on their

obstructions in a road. **highways . . exalted,** depressed parts raised to proper level.[b] The word used means an artificial road made by throwing up the earth. (12) **Sinim,** most com. are agreed that this refers to China.[c] The Arabs called China *Sin*, or *Tchin*.

Christ a physician.—As a physician, Christ differs from all others. I. In that He never studied for the profession; 2. In that He never walked the hospital to acquire practice: 3. In that He never experimented upon individuals: 4. In that He never failed to effect a cure upon a patient: 5. In that He cured body and soul; 6. In that He never delivered any bill of charges; 7. In that He accomplished such cures as none before or since Him accomplished.[d]

Christ the preacher's great theme.—The best sermon is that which is the fullest of Christ. A Welsh minister, when preaching at the chapel of my dear brother Jonathan George, was saying that Christ was the sum and substance of the Gospel, and he broke out into the following story: A young man had been preaching in the presence of a venerable divine, and after he had done, he foolishly went to the old minister and inquired, "What do you think of my sermon, sir?" "A very poor sermon indeed," said he. "A poor sermon!" said the young man; "it took me a long time to study it." "Ay, no doubt of it." "Why, then, do you say it was poor; did you not think my explanation of the text to be accurate?" "Oh, yes," said the old preacher, "very correct indeed." "Well, then, why do you say it is a poor sermon? Didn't you think the metaphors were appropriate, and the arguments conclusive?" "Yes, they were very good, as far as that goes, but still it was a very poor sermon." "Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?" "Because," said he, "there was no Christ in it." "Well," said the young man, "Christ was not in the text; we are not to be preaching Christ always; we must preach what is in the text." So the old man said, "Don't you know, young man, that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?" "Yes," said the young man. "Ah!" said the old divine, "and so from every text in Scripture there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is Christ. And, my dear brother, your business is, when you get a text, to say, 'Now, what is the road to Christ?' and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards the great metropolis—Christ. And," said he, "I have never yet found a text that had not a plain and direct road to Christ in it; and if ever I should find one that has no such road, I will make a road; I would go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for a sermon is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill, unless there is a savour of Christ in it."[e]

13, 14. (13) **sing,** *etc.*, "a joyful anticipation of the happy state of things under the Messiah, as set forth in the preceding verses."[a] (14) **said,** in the time of her doubting and fear. "The great body of the Jews were made despondent by their long adversity."[b]

God will not forget His people (*vv.* 14—16).—I. The Church's complaint against God. 1. The occasions that most generally give birth to it: 2. The dispositions and principles from which it springs. II. The consolatory reply of God to her. 1. The

way to Palestine, and of the spiritual on their way to Heaven, as their Shepherd."—*Fausset.*

b "Built up so as to form a high and clear causeway to travel on."—*Mat. Arnold.*

c Gesenius.

The name *Tsin* was known as early as B.C. 1122.

"Porcelain with Chinese inscriptions has been found in the Egyptian monuments at Thebes."—*Wilkinson.*

v. 10. *E. Cooper*, vi. 188.

v. 11. *Dr. G. Chandler*, 196.

d J. Bate.

"Christ in His person and office is the glass which represents the glory of God to us. And when we see His glory in this glass we are transformed into the same image. In this glass the scattered rays of Divine goodness and love are brought, as it were, into a focus; they shine, they burn, they inflame the heart held before it; conviction overpowers unbelief, goodness overcomes unworthiness, and love subdues enmity."—*T. Charles, of Bala.*

e C. H. Spurgeon.

a Henderson.

b Is. xl. 27.

"No language could more pathetically and tenderly describe the feelings of the Jewish Church, or the

love of God towards her, than that here employed."—*Henderson.*

v. 13. *Dr. A. Grant*, i. 91, ii. 3.

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

Why have we memory sufficient to retain the minutest circumstances that have happened to us; and yet not enough to remember how often we have related them to the same persons?

a *Mat. Henry.*

v. 15. *J. Malham*, 117; *E. Thompson*, 143.

b *Dr. Thomas.*

"Even He that died for us upon the cross, in the last hour, in the unutterable agony of death, was mindful of His mother, as if to teach us that this holy love should be our last worldly thought—the last point of earth from which the soul should take its flight for heaven."—*Longfellow.*

c *Roberts.*

Saturn is represented in mythology as a monster who devoured his own children. Vulcan was born lame, and his mother, Juno, was so enraged that she threw him out of heaven.

"The truth of truths is love."—*Bailey.*

assurance that He gives to her: 2. His confirmation of it. Address—(1) Those who have forsaken and forgotten God; (2) Those who think they are forsaken and forgotten of God.[c]

The forgotten one.—"To think that my brother could forget me!" cried Charlotte, large tears coursing down her cheeks, "when I have loved him so, and longed for our meeting again!" "It is because you are so changed that he does not remember you; you were very little when you parted," replied her mamma. "You will always be together now, and know and love each other as before." "But it will always grieve me to think that he forgot," sobbed Charlotte. "Did you never forget a friend?" "I think not, mamma." "Who is your best friend—the ever-blessed, loving friend who died for you?" "Jesus Christ, the Saviour." "Did you never forget Him?" "Oh, yes; often—often." "And yet He loves you far more than you love your brother. How your forgetfulness must grieve Him." Do we ever think of this? Before the throne of glory, Christ remembers us from day to day. Shall we, then, ever forget Him who ever intercedes for us?

15. woman, *etc.*, comp. Ps. ciii. 13; Mat. vii. 11. "A woman cannot but have compassion on a child, as both harmless and helpless. A mother esp. cannot but be concerned for her own child. A nursing mother, most of all, cannot but be tender to her sucking child; her own breast will soon put her in mind of it if she forget it."[a]

God's love greater than a mother's (*v.* 15).—I. A mother's love for her child is but a fraction derived from God's love for man. II. The strongest affection of a mother is subject to mutations. 1. The conduct of the mother may cool, or even quench this spark within her; 2. The conduct of the child may even cool or quench this spark within her. III. The object of the mother's love is not so near to her as the object of the Divine affection. 1. The mother is not the owner of the child; 2. The mother is not the life of the child. IV. The failure of the mother's affection towards her offspring would not be so terrible as the failure of God's affection towards the good.[b]

Note on v. 15.—This question is asked when a person doubts of finding mercy, where there is every reason to expect it. Does an individual express surprise at seeing a mother pay attention to an infant which is deformed, or supposed to be possessed by a devil; it is asked, Can a woman forget her sucking child? Is a woman in great haste to return home, it is inquired, "What, have you a sucking child in the house? The cub of the monkey is as dear to its dam, as gold is to us."[c]—*Maternal courage.*—As we passed through the streets of Nazareth, loud screams, as of a person frantic with rage and grief, drew our attention towards a miserable hovel, whence we perceived a woman issuing hastily with a cradle containing an infant. Having placed the child upon the area before her dwelling, she as quickly ran back again; we then perceived her beating something violently, all the while filling the air with the most piercing shrieks. Running to see what was the cause of her cries, we observed an enormous serpent, which she had found near her infant, and had completely despatched before our arrival. Never were maternal feelings more strikingly portrayed than in the countenance of this woman. Not satisfied with having killed the animal, she

continued her blows until she had reduced it to atoms, unheeding anything that was said to her, and only abstracting her attention from its mangled body, to cast, occasionally, a wild and momentary glance towards her child.[d]

16, 17. (16) graven thee, *i.e.* a picture, or plan, of thee (De. vi. 8). before me, in My sight and memory. (17) make haste, hurrying homewards, at tidings of thy restoration. destroyers, internal enemies. These, as anxiously, hurry away.[a]

Note on v. 16.—It is common to make punctures on the arms and wrists, in memory of visiting any holy place, or to represent the deity to whom the individual is consecrated: thus, a god, a temple, a peacock, or some indecent object, is described; but I never saw or heard of anything of the kind being engraved on the palms of the hands. The palms of the hands are, however, believed to have written on them the fate of the individual; and, from this, it is common to say, in reference to men or things, they are written on the palms of his hands. "I wonder why Raman has taken Seethe for his wife." "Why wonder? she was written on the palms of his hands." "Fear not," says the old soothsayer, looking into the hands of the anxious youth, "she is written here, thou shalt have her." "Alas! alas! the old deceiver told me her name was written on my palms, but she has gone, and the writing is erased." "Give up that pursuit? Never! it is written on the palms of my hands." "Ah! my friend, you have long since forgotten me." "Forgotten you! never, for your walls are ever before me." "Ah! my father, I am now in the distant country, but your walls are always in my sight." "Ah! when shall I again visit my favourite temple: the walls are continually before me."[b] This is an allusion to the Eastern custom of tracing out on their hands, not the names, but the sketches of certain eminent cities or places, and then rubbing them with the powder of the hennah or cypress, and thereby making the marks perpetual. This custom Maundrell thus describes: "The next morning nothing extraordinary passed, which gave many of the pilgrims leisure to have their arms marked with the usual ensigns of Jerusalem. The artists who undertake the operation do it in this manner: they have stamps in wood of any figure that you desire, which they first print off upon your arm, with powder or charcoal; then taking two very fine needles tied close together, and dipping them often, like a pen, in certain ink, compounded, as I was informed, of gunpowder and ox gall, they make with them small punctures all along the lines of the figure which they have printed, and then washing the part in wine, conclude the work. These punctures they make with great quickness and dexterity, and with scarce any smart, seldom piercing so deep as to draw blood.[c]

18, 19. (18) lift, *etc.*, comp. ch. lx. 4. come to thee, lit. *for thee;* to be thy own.[a] clothe, *etc.*, Lowth says, describing the bride as binding children round her: but the point of comparison between type and antitype is not children, but decoration.[b] bind, "as an embroidered sash wh. fastens the bridal attire." (19) too narrow, straitened for room by abundance of inhabitants.[c] swallowed, *etc.*, Zion's foreign conquerors shall leave her to her own children.

Promised increase of the Church (*vv.* 18—23).—I. The promised

d Dr. E. D. Clarke.

There is free love in God for me. This free love flows out and down to me in consequence of another's work and worth. To believe this is salvation!

"Love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned."—*Solomon.*

a Is. lx. 10, 18.

b Roberts.

"The soul of woman lives in love."—*Mrs. Sigourney.*

c Burder.

a "They should be to her as an ornament, a gold or silver headdress; for she is now again a joyous bride. Ever since Horeb, when she violated her vows of betrothal, the Israelic Church

had put off her joyous 'ornament.'"-*Spk.Com.*
b J. A. Alexander.
c "This prophecy was literally fulfilled in the immense population of Judæa, between the return from captivity and the time of our Lord."—*Henderson.*
d C. Simeon, M.A.
"You have stood by the sea-shore, and have noticed in some parts the deep holes in the sand and rock. But when the tide has come up it has filled up all those crevices and holes. There are wants in our hearts,—unsatisfied longings; look to Christ. In Him there is a tide of grace to fill up every hollow and crevice in your nature."—*Rev. Thomas Jones.*
e H. W. Beecher.

increase of the Church. 1. In number; 2. In honour. II. The encouragement it affords us for missionary exertions. 1. God is able to effect this great thing; 2. He has actually engaged to effect it; 3. The beginnings are already visible before our eyes. Apply:—(1) Let our expectations of it be enlarged; (2) Let our prayers for it be poured forth: (3) Let our exertions be used.[d]

Christ hidden away in the Church.—Not long ago, a researcher of art in Italy, who reading in some book that there was a portrait of Dante painted by Giotto, was led to suspect that he had found where it had been placed. There was an apartment used as an outhouse for the storage of wood, hay, and the like. He besought and obtained permission to examine it. Clearing out the rubbish, and experimenting upon the whitewashed wall, he soon detected the signs of the long-hidden portrait. Little by little, with loving skill, he opened up the sad, thoughtful, stern face of the old Tuscan poet. Sometimes it seems to me that thus the very sanctuary of God has been filled with wood, hay, and stubble, and the Divine lineaments of Christ have been swept over and covered by the painting hands of men; and I am seized with an invincible ardour to draw forth from its hiding place, and reveal to men, the glory of God as it shines in the face of Christ Jesus! It matters little to me what school of theology rises or what falls, so only that Christ may rise and appear in all His Father's glory, full-orbed, upon the darkness of this world! It matters little to me what Church comes forth strong, or what becomes weak, so only that the poor, the sinful, the neglected, the lost among men, may have presented to them, in the Church, a Saviour accessible, reached easily by the human understanding, and available in every hour of temptation, or of remorse, or of want.[e]

20, 21. (20) **children . . other**, meaning the inhabitants of which thou wast bereaved. **give place**, so that I may extend my borders. Reference may be to the extension of the Church among the Gentiles. (21) **who**, *etc.*, she had supposed herself childless, and now utters her surprise to find her people so numerous.[a]

He died for me.—The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher recently visited the Soldiers' Cemetery at Nashville, United States. "Here," he says, "I observed a man planting a flower over a grave. I approached him and asked if his son was buried there. 'No,' was the response. 'A son-in-law?' 'No.' 'A brother?' 'No.' 'A relative?' 'No.' 'Whose memory, then, do you cherish?' I ventured to ask. After delaying a moment and putting down a small board which he had in his hand, he replied, 'Well, I will tell you. When the war broke out I lived in Illinois. I wanted to enlist, but I was poor, and a large family of children depended upon me for their daily bread. Finally, as the war continued, I was drafted. No draft-money was given me; I was unable to procure a substitute, and made up my mind to go. After I had got everything in readiness, and was just going to report for duty at the conscript camp, a young man whom I had known came to me and said, "You have a large family, whom your wife cannot support while you are gone; I will go for you." In the battle of Chickamauga the poor fellow was dangerously wounded, and he, along with others, was taken back to hospital at Nashville. After a lingering illness he died

and was buried here. Ever since hearing of his death I have been desirous of coming to Nashville, and seeing that his remains were properly buried. Having saved sufficient funds I came on yesterday, and have to-day found the poor fellow's grave.' On completing his story the man took up the small board and inserted it at the foot of the grave. Turning to look at it, I saw this simple inscription and nothing more: 'He died for me.'"

22, 23. (22) **standard**, to call together God's people. **arms**, lit. *bosom*, the part of the garment which opens at the bosom, in which young children are carried. **daughters . . shoulders**, so children are borne when able to sit up.[a] (23) **kings**, *etc.*, figures of the zeal, liberality, and kind helpfulness afforded to the Jews on the return to their own land. **lick . . dust**, falling prostrate and kissing the ground on which the Church stood or walked.[b]

Note on v. 22.—It is a custom in many parts of the East to carry their children astride upon the hip, with the arm round the body. In the kingdom of Algiers, when the slaves take the children out, the boys ride upon their shoulders; and in a religious procession, which Symes had an opportunity of seeing at Ava, the capital of the Burman empire, the first personages of rank that passed by, were three children borne astride on men's shoulders. It is evident from these facts that the Oriental children are carried sometimes the one way, sometimes the other. Nor was the custom in reality different in Judæa, though the Prophet expresses himself in these terms: "They shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders;" for, according to Dr. Russel, the children able to support themselves, are usually carried astride on the shoulder: but in infancy they are carried in the arms, or awkwardly on one haunch. Dandini tells us, that on horseback the Asiatics "carry their young children upon their shoulders with great dexterity. These children hold by the head of him who carries them, whether he be on horseback or on foot, and do not hinder him from walking, nor doing what he pleases." "This augments the import of the passage in Isaiah, who speaks of the Gentiles bringing children thus; so that distance is no objection to this mode of conveyance, since they may thus be brought on horseback from 'among the peoples,' however remote."[c] Children of both sexes are carried on the shoulders. Thus may be seen the father carrying his son, the little fellow being astride on the shoulder, having, with his hands, hold of his father's head. Girls, however, sit on the shoulder, as if on a chair, their legs hanging in front, while they also with their hands lay hold of the head. In going to, or returning from, heathen festivals, thousands of parents and their children may be thus seen marching along with joy. In this way shall the Gentiles bring their sons and their daughters to Jehovah: kings shall then be "nursing fathers," and queens "nursing mothers."[d]—*A king a nursing father.*—When Messrs. Tyerman and Bennett, in their visit to the southern islands, held a large missionary meeting previously to their departure for the Marquesas Islands, at which several persons offered to accompany them as missionaries, to introduce the Gospel where it was at present unknown; after some offers of this kind had been accepted, Hautia, the regent of the island, who was virtually king, and held valuable hereditary

mour of righteousness, that if the adversary challenge to combat, we may by no flattery—by no force—by no terrors—by no torments, be drawn and plucked away from Christ."—*T. Rogers.*

a "Among the South Sea Islanders, it is a mark of honour for females to be borne astride on men's shoulders."—*Henderson.*

b "Ibu Batuta relates that when the daughter of Constantinople, one of the wives of the Sultan of Uzbek Tartary, returned on a visit to her parents, and met them, she alighted, and kissed the ground before them, as well as the hoofs of their horses."—*Henderson.*

Ps. lxxii. 11; Is. lx. 16.

v. 22. *Dr. J. Lawson*, 291; *J. Collingwood*, 315.

v. 23. *Bp. Burnet*, 83; *W. Stephens*, ii. 271; *Archbp. Sharp*, ii. 75; *J. Penn*, 303; *T. Buckley*, ii. 182; *H. Blunt*, 232; *J. Keble*, 149.

"God oftentimes delays that His people may come to Him with greater strength and importunity. He puts them off, that they may put on with more life and vigour. God seems to be cold, that He may make us the more hot; He seems to be slack, that He may make us the more earnest; He seems to be

backward, that He may make us the more forward in pressing upon Him." — *Thomas Brookes*, 1650.

c Paxton.

d Roberts.

Lander, during his journey in Africa, frequently met with mothers who carried about their persons little wooden images of their deceased infants, to whose lips they presented a portion of food whenever they partook of it themselves; and nothing could induce them to part with these inanimate memorials.

e Cheever.

a "As the antagonistic factions in Jerusalem, during the Roman siege."—*Spk. Com.*

"Before the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, Evil-Merodach had been murdered by Neriglissor; Laborosoarchodus, the son and successor of the latter, was likewise put to death; and, according to Xenophon, it was two generals of the king of Babylon, Gobrias and Gadarus, who had gone over to Cyrus, that forced their way into the palace and slew the king." —*Henderson.*

b Dr. Lyman Beecher.

Diocletian, the possessions upon it, and received large contributions to support his royal state, both from chiefs and people, rose: his noble countenance betrayed much agitation of spirit, and he hesitated for awhile to unburden his mind in words. At length with an air of meekness and humility, which gave inexpressible grace to the dignity of the highborn highland chief, he said, "I have a little speech, because a thought has grown up in my heart, and it has grown up also in the heart of Hautia Vahine (his wife). But perhaps it is not a good thought; yet I must speak it; and this is our thought: if the missionaries, and the deputation, and the church of Huahine, think that I and my wife would be fit companions for Auna and his wife, to teach the good word of God to those idolatrous people, who are as we were, and cause them to become as we are here, and in Tahiti, and Eimeo, and Raiatea, and Borabora, we should be rejoiced to go; but perhaps we are not worthy, and others may be better suited for the blessed work; yet we should love to go." This declaration produced a most extraordinary sensation throughout the whole assembly, as the speaker had given good evidence of his true Christianity. When, however, it was represented to him that his usefulness where he was in the church, as the superintendent of the schools, and in the exertion of his influence among his subjects, was far more extensive than that of any other person could be; and that, though it was well that this thought was in his heart, yet he could not on these accounts be sent, he was deeply affected, and replied, "Since you say so, perhaps it is the Lord's will that we should not go to the Marquesas, but stay in Huahine; perhaps we may serve Him better here. Be it so; and yet I wish that it had fallen to me and my wife to go." Oh, what a lesson is this to Christians![e]

24—26. (24) **prey . . mighty,** doubt whether Israel can thus be delivered from the Chaldæans. **lawful captive,** bec. Israel had been delivered into the hands of the Chaldæans by Jehovah. (25) **I will contend,** in turn bringing Divine judgments on them. (26) **feed . . flesh,** phrase for internal strifes.[a] **sweet wine,** *must.* The pure juice which flows from a heap of grapes before they are pressed.

The resources of the adversary and the means of their destruction (*vv.* 24, 25).—I. The defences and resources of the enemy. 1. Idolatry; 2. Imposture; 3. Papal superstition; 4. Despotic government; 5. Crime; 6. An easy-going religion: 7. Corrupting the purity of revivals of religion. II. The means of their destruction. 1. The judgments of heaven; 2. The universal propagation of the Gospel; 3. General revivals of religion. Apply:—(1) There must be more faith in God; (2) A more intense love for Christ and His Church; (3) More courage; (4) More zeal; (5) Religious education; (6) More of charitable effort; (7) To guard against the dangers of religious prosperity.[b]

One Saviour for prince and peasant.—His Royal Highness, the late Duke of Kent, father of our beloved Queen, during his illness, asked his physician if he was accustomed to pray. "Please your Royal Highness, I hope I say my prayers; but shall I bring a prayer book?" "No," was the reply, "what I mean is, if you are accustomed to pray for yourself, you could pray for me in my present situation." The doctor then asked if he should

call the duchess. "Do," said the prince. The duchess came and offered up a most affectionate prayer on behalf of her beloved husband. On another occasion, when the duke expressed some concern about the state of his soul in the prospect of death, his physician endeavoured to soothe his mind by referring to his high respectability and his honourable conduct in the distinguished situation in which Providence had placed him, when he stopped him short, saying, "No; remember, if I am to be saved, it is not as a prince, but as a sinner." When his Royal Highness felt that he was approaching the termination of his earthly career, he desired the infant princess to be placed before him while he sat up in bed. In this position he offered a most affecting prayer over her, the last part of which was to this effect, if not in this very language, that "if ever this child should be Queen of England, she might rule in the fear of God." Having uttered these words, he said, "Take the child away," and this was the last time he ever beheld her. These particulars were received from the late Rev. Legh Richmond, chaplain to his Royal Highness, who had them from the medical gentleman himself, when they were travelling together to attend the funeral.

last and the worst of the Roman persecuting emperors, observed, that the more he sought to blot out the name of Christ, the more legible it became; and that whatever of Christ he thought to eradicate, it took the deeper root, and rose the higher in the hearts and lives of men.

"Our very wretchedness grows dear to us when suffering for one we love."—*Bulwer Lytton.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTIETH.

1. bill . . divorcement, De. xxiv. 1, 2.[a] "Zion is the mother, the Jews are the children, and God is the Husband and Fatehr."[b] **creditors,** this question is asked on the assumption that God had sold His people into captivity for His own advantage. **sold yourselves,** *comp.* Le. xxv. 39, 47.

The falling away of Christian professors—The brittle branch.—In the summer of 1870 a young man, who lay under the shadow of one of the elm trees in the forest of Windsor, was killed by the falling down upon him of one of the largest branches. There was no storm of wind at the time; on the contrary, the air was calm and motionless, and not a leaf in the forest stirred; the branch was not old and rotten; on the contrary, it was fresh, full of sap, and covered with rich green foliage. This strange thing not unfrequently happens to the elm during the long continuance of dry and sultry weather, which has the effect of making its wood brittle, so that the branches part easily from the tree, and fall down by their own weight. How many professing Christians are made fickle and unsteadfast during a period of trial, so that they lose their hold of the Church, and fall away from it at once, while apparently green and flourishing![c]

a Comp. Je. iii. 8; Mat. v. 31.
b Feausset. "Zion complains that her children are lost, and she is divorced. God answers: Can a writing of divorcement be shown against Me as in a man's case, to prove a formal divorce? Or, have I creditors, to whom, as a human debtor, I sell My children? Zion is abandoned, and her children lost to her, but for a time, because of her sins, and while her sins last."—*Mat. Arnold.*
c Macmillan.

2, 3. (2) **I came,** God by His word and providence, prepared to deliver and redeem.[a] **no man,** ready to believe My message and promise. A strong way of indicating the general unbelief. "No man to receive Me." **hand shortened,** common Arabic phrase for powerlessness.[b] **dry . . wilderness,** recalling scenes of Ex. xiv. 21; Jos. iii. 16. (3) **blackness,** recalling the plague of darkness in Egypt, and indicating God's power over the elements.

The teacher of the weary (*v.* 2).—These words could have been spoken only by the man Christ Jesus. They place before our

a Some refer this to the Prophets, others to Messiah. But the first reference is plainly to the Divine intervention for the deliverance of captive Israel
b "Shortness of

hand or arm is a common Oriental figure for defect of power, esp. in reference to some particular effect, which is thus represented as beyond the reach. According to *Gesenius*, Artaxerxes Longimanus was so called, not in reference to any corporeal peculiarity, but as being possessed of extraordinary power."—*J. A. Alexander.*

Ps cxiv. 3, 5, 7.

c C. Stanford.

d Campbell.

The virtue of Christ's blood is needed by us all our lives; because corruption remains in us all our lives.

"Humble love, and not proud science, keeps the door of heaven."—*Young.*

e S. Charnock.

a Pr. xv. 23, xxv. 11.

b Mat. xi. 28.

c "The Father did not speak in dreams or visions to the well-beloved Son; but continually every morning He spake in His opened ear, and declared what He was to say; and thus the Messiah was the wisdom of God speaking unto men face to face."—*Wordsworth.*

v 4. *H. Melvill*, 126.

d Dr. Raleigh.

thoughts—I. His Divine power and glory. II. His human life and education. III. The mediatorial teaching for which He had been thus prepared. 1. It is personal; 2. It is suitable to our weariness while we are in a state of unregeneracy, when sinking under a burden of guilt, when sinking under a burden of care, when burdened under the intellectual mysteries of theology, when under the burden of mortal infirmity; 3. It is minutely direct and particular.[e]

Note on v. 2.—The Krooman (or Koorooman) river, in Africa, which is a considerable stream, used to run in an oblique direction across the great southern Zahara desert, till it emptied itself into the Great Orange River. Now it sinks out of sight into the sand almost immediately on entering the desert, only a few miles after the junction of the Macklareen river with its waters. As a proof that it had once run in the desert, I travelled ten or fifteen miles on its hard dry channel along which it had run after entering the desert, having a steep bank on both sides, beyond which there was nothing but deep sand. The aged natives told me that in their young days there was a considerable river in that channel, and sometimes rose so high that it could not be crossed for a long time. They first blamed the Matslaroo people for drying it up by means of witchcraft, but afterwards acknowledged it must have been done by the hand of God.[d]—*Power to save.*—God is a spring. This day and to-morrow, Jehovah unchangeable. The God of Isaac is not like Isaac that had one blessing and no more; He hath as much now as He had the first moment that mercy streamed from Him to His creatures, and the same for as many as shall believe in Christ to the end of the world. Nay, the more we receive from God in the way of faith, the more God hath for us. A believer's harvest for present mercies is his seed-time for more. "Because Thou hast been my help." The more mercies he reaps, the more hopes of future mercy he hath. God's mercies, when full-blown, seed again, and come up thicker. Can the creature want more than this everlasting fountain can supply?[e]

4. **given me**, in the singular way peculiar to Isaiah; references to the Prophet himself, to the servant of Jehovah, and to the Messiah, are closely blended. In this *v.* the reference is evidently to Messiah. **learned**, or fully instructed. **word in season**,[a] with precise adaptation. Lit. *to succour by words.* **weary**,[b] or dispersed ones. **wakeneth mine ear**,[c] so as to be ever ready to receive Divine communications. **learned**, or learners, disciples.

Words to the weary (*v.* 4).—God in His Word speaks often to the weary. 1. To him that is weary by the overtoil of life; 2. By the commonness and comparative meanness of labour: 3. By the perplexities and difficulties of life: 4. To him that is weary in well-doing; 5. With the strife with sin. Apply—Come unto me, etc.[d]—*A word in season to the weary.*—I. The state and character of them that are weary. 1. Those who have spent their time in fruitless searches after human knowledge; 2. Those who are oppressed with the load of sin and guilt; 3. Those who are under the weight of affliction; 4. Those who have laboured in fruitless endeavours to overcome their corruptions; 5. Those who have vainly sought to work out salvation by their own righteousness; 6. Those deeply involved in the cares of this

world ; 7. Those who are tired of living in this world. II. The character and person of the Lord Jesus Christ constitute Him a seasonable and all-sufficient Saviour to all those who are weary. Apply the former heads in succession.[e]

5, 6. (5) **opened mine ear,**[a] *comp.* ch. xlviii. 8. **not rebellious,** contrasted with Israel's rebelliousness. **turned away back,** illus. by contrasting conduct of Jonah. (6) **smiters,** *etc.*, literally fulfilled in the scenes of our Lord's trials.[b] **spitting,** "an expression of contemptuous abhorrence."[c]

Messiah's sufferings and supports (*vv.* 5—9).—I. His sufferings. 1. They were great and various ; 2. He willingly undertook to sustain them all. II. His supports. 1. Effectual succour ; 2. A triumphant issue. Contemplate this holy Sufferer—(1) As the predicted Saviour of the world ; (2) As the great Pattern of all holy obedience.[d]

Note on v. 6.—Mr. Hanway has recorded a scene differing little, if at all, from that alluded to by the Prophet. "A prisoner was brought, who had two large logs of wood fitted to the small of his leg, and riveted together ; there was also a heavy triangular collar of wood about his neck. The general asked me if that man had taken my goods. I told him I did not remember to have seen him before. He was questioned some time, and at length ordered to be beaten with sticks, which was performed by two soldiers with such severity as if they meant to kill him. The soldiers were then ordered to spit in his face, an indignity of great antiquity in the East. This, and the cutting off beards, which I shall have occasion to mention, brought to my mind the sufferings recorded in the prophetical history of our Saviour, Isaiah l. 6. Sadoc Aga sent prisoner to Astrabad ; his beard was cut off ; his face was rubbed with dirt, and his eyes cut out. Upon his speaking in pathetic terms with that emotion natural to a daring spirit, the general ordered him to be struck across the mouth to silence him, which was done with such violence that the blood issued forth."[e]—"Towards evening the weather became squally, and the old captain would gladly have made a few reefs in his wide-spreading canvas ; the boatswain was accordingly set to work to have this accomplished ; in the meantime the foresail went to shivers. Never was there a scene of greater confusion. In the midst of it, one of us attempted to assist, and even spoke to the captain. His rage upon being addressed by an infidel at this critical moment exceeded all bounds. He spat first upon the deck, then into the sea, attributing the accident entirely to our presence on board, and cursing the whole race of Christians as the authors of all the ill luck he had ever encountered."[f]

7—9. (7) **will help me,** this conviction is the secret of Messiah's strength and endurance. **set my face,** Lu. ix. 15. **like a flint,** a fig. for holy endurance and set purpose.[a] (8) **justifieth me,**[b] or vindicateth. See Ro. viii. 32, 33. **adversary,** Heb. *master of my cause*, who has sufficient ground of accusation against me. (9) **wax . . garment,** his adversaries shall vainly attempt to condemn him, and shall become, as it were, old and moth-eaten[c] ere they succeed.

He is near (*v.* 8).—I. This is the assurance of Christ. II. The experience of the saints in the time of adversity. III. The

e J. Matheson, B.A.

a Ps. xl. 6; He. x. 5.

b Mat. xxvi. 67, xxvii. 30; Lu. xviii. 31—33 : see also Lu. xviii. 31.

c Job xxx. 10.

v. 5. *Bp. Sandford, Lec.* 55.

v. 6. *J. Newton*, iv. 209.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

Spitting in the face.—"This instance of contempt and reproach offered to Christ was at the same time an expression of malice and a compliance with custom. The practice has descended to later generations ; for in the year 1744, when a rebel prisoner was brought before Nadir Shah's general, 'the soldiers were ordered to spit in his face, an indignity of great antiquity in the East.'"—*Hanway's Travels.*

e Burder.

f Clarke.

a "Set Myself resolutely, not to be daunted from My work of love by shame or suffering."—*Fausset.* Eze. iii. 8, 9.

b "The charge was, that, in claiming to be the *Son of God*, He had committed blasphe-

my. The *resurrection* justified Him (Ro. i. 4)." —*Spk. Com.*

c "It is in the larval state that moths fret the garments. They furrow the thick parts of woollen clothes, and furs, and in these furrows pass from the larval into the chrysalis state.

1 Pe. ii. 21—23.

d Stems and Twigs.

e W. Jay.

f Bp. Butler.

conclusion of faith. 1. From His relationship; 2. From His promises. IV. And should be the song of His people.[d]—*The nearness of our Vindicator* (*v.* 8).—Consider these words—1. As the language of Christ to His Father; 2. As the language of Christians to Christ.[e]

Mediation of Christ.—The whole analogy of nature removes all imagined presumption against the notion of "a Meditor between God and man." For we find, all living creatures are brought into the world, and their life in infancy is preserved, by the instrumentality of others; and every satisfaction of it, some way or other, is bestowed by the like means. So that the visible government which God exercises over the world is by the instrumentality and mediation of others. And how far His invisible government be or be not so, it is impossible to determine at all by reason. And the supposition that part of it is so, appears, to say the least, altogether as credible as the contrary. There is, then, no sort of objection, from the light of nature, against the general notion of a Mediator between God and man, considered as a doctrine of Christianity, or as an appointment in this dispensation, since we find by experience that God does appoint mediators to be the instruments of good and evil to us, the instruments of His justice and His mercy.[f]

10, 11. (10) **who,** God here speaks. Whosoever. **his servant,** *i.e.* Messiah. **that walketh,** or, though he walketh. **trust . . God,**[a] gaining confidence by the multiplied experiences of His faithfulness. (11) **kindle a fire,** fig. for methods of trying to relieve and help themselves, so as not to depend on God. **sparks,**[b] or torches. **in sorrow,**[c] ch. xliii. 17. lxvi. 24.

Encouragement only to the devoted and obedient (*v.* 10).—Bring out the meaning of the text,—light an emblem, etc. I. It might be applied to a case like that of Joseph while lying under the reproach of a crime which he never committed, and which he abhorred. II. The situation of David during the lifetime of Saul was such as would have justified the application of the text. III. The case of the Church at the present day when looking at the moral condition of the world in connection with the prophecies.[d]

Note on v. 10.—When a man can say, "My God," if he can add no more—that is sufficient; for my God is all-wise in appointing, and almighty to uphold and to deliver. My God is a Father to me in Christ; yea, He is a Father who hid His face from Christ for my good. If, then, I am in darkness, let me remember that God never had a son that was not sometimes in the dark: for even Christ, His only begotten Son, cried out, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—*Note on v.* 11—*Grass fires of little value.*—This passage presents a striking allusion to a fire made with grass, which, while burning, emits many a dancing spark, that, after a vain promise to enliven the surrounding gloom for a moment, suddenly sinks into darkness. The wet and shivering inmates of the hovel seek for light and heat by crowding close to the blazing hearth, but after many fruitless attempts, and the consumption of their stock, they are compelled to retire to their ill-covered pallets—"they lie down in sorrow."

a "Whatever might be the afflictions and persecutions to which they should be subject on account of their fidelity to his cause, they might confidently reckon on Divine protection and support."—*Henderson.* Ps. xlvi. 1, lxii. 8, cxviii. 8, 9; Mi. vii. 8; Ha. iii. 17, 18.

b Heb. *Zikoth,* fiery darts.

c "This is said to the Jews, who receive with incredulity, anger, and persecution God's message and messenger. In this, as in the preceding *v.*, it is God who speaks; and He warns these Jews that their anger and violence shall be turned against themselves, and they shall 'lie down in sorrow.'"—*Mat. Arnold.*

d W. C. Walton, M.A.

e R. Cecil.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-FIRST.

1—3. (1) **follow . . righteousness,** the address is now directed to the faithful few of Israel: those really desiring to be conformed to the will of God.[a] **seek the Lord,** Ps. xxiv. 6. **rock . . pit,** fig. for their origin in Abraham and Sarah,[b] the progenitors of the nation. (2) **him alone,** *i.e.* when he was but one; alone and childless.[c] (3) **comfort Zion,** *etc., i.e.* rest assured that He who abundantly blessed Abraham will abundantly bless Abraham's seed.[d]

Retrospection (*v.* 1).—I. The persons addressed. 1. They that follow after righteousness in state and in character; 2. They that seek the Lord by prayer. II. The duty enjoined. 1. The thing to be done—mental survey, etc.; 2. The ends to be served by it—deepen humility, inflame love, stimulate obedience, etc.[e]

The rock and the pit.—The Rev. Dr. Stanley, Dean of Westminster, preaching in aid of the Palestine Exploration Fund, chose his text from Isaiah li. 1. After referring to the earliest exploration of Jerusalem, which had taken place shortly after this prophecy first appeared—that by Nehemiah, when he arrived from Babylonia, and in the dead of the night had gone through the ruins of the city and the temple—the Dean spoke of the characteristic tendency of the age to investigate and probe everything to the bottom, to go down to the native rock, and reach the living source of history, tradition, or topography,—a tendency of which the present exploration of Palestine was the natural and inevitable result. Much as the Holy Land had been visited from the West, its accurate investigation was a thing of very recent existence. It had begun, in fact, only with that lamented member of the American churches, Dr. Robinson, who was the first to travel there with his eyes and ears open to whatever there was to see and hear in connection with sacred topography. What had been done already for the upper surface and the general aspect of the country it was now intended to do for its original soil, long buried beneath the accumulations of so many ages, races, and generations,—to do, in fact, what has already been done at Pompeii, Rome, Egypt, and Nineveh. Of such investigations Jerusalem was the natural centre; and here the Dean mentioned three results which he thought might reasonably be hoped from the present undertaking:—1. A monument of the Old Testament of peculiar and special interest, the catacomb containing the tombs of David and the kings of Judah, the prototype of all the royal tombs of the modern world. It alone, of all tombs, was permitted to be within the walls of the city. In it, around the central cell of the founder, were grouped nearly all the kings of his line,—his wise son Solomon, his great successors Asa and Jehoshaphat, with the high priest Jehoiada, the one personage of humbler rank who had been allowed a place there. Apart from anything that might be found in the tombs, its discovery would be of immense value as fixing the position of the "city of David." The last time it was seen was when Herod the Great broke into it in search of treasure; but there could be no reasonable doubt that it was still buried beneath the rubbish, and still recoverable. 2. Another monument was the "holy sepulchre." The church in which this was shown had been the

a "How are the people of God to be described? They are such as 'follow after righteousness,' such as are very desirous and solicitous both to be justified and to be sanctified; are pressing hard after this, to have the favour of God restored to them, and the image of God renewed on them."—*Mat. Henry.*

b "Whence were these living stones quarried, of wh. the house of Israel is built?"—*Spk. Com.*

c Eze. xxxiii. 24.

d Zion is the correlative of Sarah, the mother of us all.

e G. Brooks.

vv. 1, 2. *R. Warner,* ii. 113; *E. Cooper,* iv. 327; *A. Roberts,* i. 110; *J. Cooper,* 161.

vv. 1, 2. *H. Blunt,* ii. 104.

"Away like a shadow."—*Wisdom of Solomon.* "Away like a summer'sshade."—*Spenser.* "Like a shadow on the wall."—*Chaucer.* Like summer clouds."—*C. Fox.* "Like clouds before the sun."—*Quarles.* "Away like clouds before the uprising sun."—*Cumberland.* "Like smoke before the wind."—*Quarles.* "Like a vapour."—*Mrs. Cowley.* "Like gentle winds over the standing corn."—*T. Cooke.* "Away like a summer

breeze." — *Mrs. Hemans.* "Like April showers over a field."—*Young.* "Like the pageant of a day."—*H. Blair.* "As a winter's tale by the fireside."—*Young.*

centre of pilgrimage and crusade for many a century, but latterly the feeling had very much cooled towards it. Many considerations tended to throw doubt on the present position, and the question ought to be cleared up, which it could only be by excavation of the course of the walls. 3. There were the natural features of the old Jerusalem; and here the Dean spoke of the discovery which had been already made by the Palestine Exploration Fund, by which the enormous depth of those sacred walls had been for the first time revealed, and the accuracy of Josephus substantiated, and a new force given to the narrative of the temptation of Christ.

4, 5. (4) **my people**, *i.e.* the Jews.[a] **law . . judgment**, the Gospel dispensation and institutions.[b] *Law*, as Divine revelation unfolding man's duty. **rest**, settle, establish. **light**, moral guidance. (5) **righteousness**, or faithful fulfilment of promises. **near**, and therefore ready to be revealed. **the isles**, put for the Gentiles.[c] **arms**, common fig. of the actual arm or hand of God swaying human affairs.

The absolute in human history (*v.* 4).—Rectitude and salvation are the elements of God's revelation, and they are the absolute in human history. I. They are for all lands. II. They are for all times. Words suggest—1. That man is related to two distinct systems of things—material and spiritual; 2. That one of the systems to which man is related is transient, the other is permanent; 3. That the permanent should command man's chief concern. The great lesson is to beware of practical materialism.[d]

Life purchased by Christ's death.—There was an army once where the soldiers mutinied—rose in rebellion against their commanders, and for this they were to be punished. All of them deserved death, for all had broken the law. But the general's order was that only every tenth man should die. The other nine should be spared. So the long line of men was drawn up, and the counting commenced. Anxious times there! One! two! three! four! five! six! seven! eight! nine! ten! Let that man step out and be shot. One! two! three! four! five! six! seven!—How the men who were passed breathed free! Eight! nine! Didn't the next man tremble as the call came toward him! Ten, and he must step forward and die. In that line stood a father and son, next each other. As the counting came down towards them, the son ran his eye up the line and saw that his father would be the tenth man, and must die, unless he could save him. He resolved to give his life for his father's. Quick! there was no time to be lost. Five! six! seven! came the count on their ten. Eight! nine! and like a flash the son changed places with his father, pushing him one down the line. Ten! came the count to the son, and he stepped out to die. His father was saved. This is the way, children, that Jesus died for us. We were all under sentence of death. Jesus stepped into our places. He died for us.[e]

6. **heavens . . smoke**,[a] contrasting the perishable nature of all earthly things with the durability of the Gospel blessings. **in like manner**, lit. *like a gnat*.[b]

God's everlasting salvation (*v.* 6).—I. God's salvation is independent of, and will outlive, everything human. II. It will outlive the material earth. III. Over the whole earth broods

a "O peoples, . . nations, *i.e.* the Gentiles." — *Gesenius.*

Is. xlii. 1—4, 6.

b Fausset.

c Is. xlii. 4, 10, xlix. 1, lx. 9.

d Dr. Thomas.

When Esculus was accused for some impiety, his brother stood up for him and showed the magistrates how he had lost his hand in the service of the State, and so obtained his pardon; thus, when Satan accuseth the saints, or when the justice of God lays anything to their charge, Christ shows His own wounds, and by virtue of His bloody sufferings He answers all the demands and challenges of the law, and counterworks Satan's accusations.

e R. Wells.

a Ps. cii. 26; Mat. xxiv. 35; 2 Pe. iii. 10, 12.

b Gesenius.

"Those whose happiness is bound up in

the mighty law of change.[c]—*The eternity of God's salvation* (*v.* 6).—I. The design and destiny of the heavens and the earth. II. The destiny of the mortal race of man. III. The destiny of God's saving rule.[d]

Jesus my substitute.—"When I was a boy at school," said a distinguished speaker to a deeply solemnised audience, "I saw a sight that I never can forget—a man tied to a cart, and dragged before the people's eyes through the streets of my native town, his back torn and bleeding from the lash. It was a shameful punishment. For many offences? No, for one offence. Did any of the townsmen offer to divide the lashes with him? No; he who committed the offence bore the penalty all alone. It was the penalty of a changing human law; for it was the last instance of its infliction. When I was a student at the university, I saw another sight I never can forget—a man brought out to die. His arms were pinioned, his face was already pale as death, thousands of eager eyes were on him as he came up from the jail in sight. Did any man ask to die in his room? Did any friend loose the rope, and say, 'Put it round my neck, I die instead'? No; he underwent the sentence of the law. For many offences? No, for one offence. He had stolen a money parcel from a stage-coach. He broke the law at one point, and died for it. It was the penalty of a changing human law in this case also; it was the last instance of capital punishment being inflicted for that offence. I saw another sight—it matters not when—myself a sinner standing on the brink of ruin, deserving nought but hell. For one sin? No, for many, many sins, committed against the unchanging laws of God. But again I looked, and saw Jesus, my Substitute, scourged in my stead, and dying on the cross for me. I looked, and cried, and was forgiven.[e]

7, 8. (7) hearken, *comp. vv.* 1, 4. men, Heb. *enosh*, or frail men. revilings, taunts on the assumed failure of God's plans.[a] (8) moth . . eat, "not that the moth *eats men up*, but they shall be destroyed by as insignificant instrumentality as the moth that eats a garment."[b] The worm shall eat them like wool, or a woollen cloth.

A dissuasive from the fear of man (*vv.* 7, 8).—I. The fact here supposed. 1. It at the first sight appears strange; 2. It is common in all ages; 3. It is not difficult to account for it. II. The advice here given in reference to it. 1. The advice itself; 2. The considerations with which it is enforced. Add a word—(1) Of caution; (2) Of encouragement.[c]

Christian courage.—There is a religion called the Christian, whose founder was Jesus, named the Christ. This religion, which has lasted eighteen centuries, and which calls itself the natural development of that Judaism which ascends near to the cradle of the world, had the Apostles for its first propagators. When these men wished to establish it they had for adversaries—the national pride of the Jews; the implacable hatred of the Sanhedrim; the brutal despotism of the Roman emperors; the railleries and attacks of the philosophers; the libertinism and caste-spirit of the Pagan priests; the savage and cruel ignorance of the masses; the faggot and bloody games of a circus. They had an enemy in—every miser; every debauched man; every drunkard; every thief, every murderer; every proud man; every slanderer; every liar. Not one of the vices, in fact, which abuse our poor Christ's righteousness will have the comfort of it when time and days shall be no more."—*Mat. Henry.*

v. 6. *W. Richardson*, i. 377; *Dr. H. Pearson*, 122; *Lord A. Hervey*, i. 99.

c D. Johnson, M.A.

d E. Johnson, B.A.

As those birds that fly highest in the firmament are not so quickly snared by the fowlers' gins as others are; so, likewise, those men that have always an eye through faith unto Jesus Christ, whose minds do mount above the skies, are not so soon snared by the flesh, the world, and the devil, as others be.

e Good Words.

a Spk. Com.

b Fausset.

Is. l. 9, li. 6.

v. 7. *J. Heylyn*, ii. 400; *T. Baseley*, 185.

vv. 7, 8. *Dr. W. Leechman*, iii. 110; *T. Dale*, 90.

v. 8. *Jon. Edwards*, i. 532.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"As the fashions of the garments of the Orientals never change, they have large stores of them; but they have no little difficulty in preserving them from moths: which circumstance may have occasioned their profuse use of perfumes."—*Roberts.*

"The name of Jesus is not only

light, but also food; it is likewise oil, without which all the food of the soul is dry; it is salt, unseasoned by which whatever is presented to us is insipid; it is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, joy in the heart, medicine to the soul; and there are no charms in any discourse in which His name is not heard."—*Bernard.*

humanity which did not constitute itself their adversary. To combat so many enemies, and surmount so many obstacles, they had only—their poverty; their obscurity; their weakness; their fewness: the cross. If you had been their contemporary at the moment when they began their work, and Peter had said to you, "Join with us, for we are going to the conquest of the world; before our word Pagan temples shall crumble, and their idols shall fall upon their faces; the philosophers shall be convinced of their folly; from the throne of Cæsar we shall hurl the Roman eagle, and in its place we shall plant the cross; we shall be the teachers of the world; the ignorant and the learned will declare themselves our disciples;" as you are tolerant from nature and principle, you would have defended him before the Sanhedrim, and counselled it to shut up the fisherman of Bethsaida and his companions in a madhouse. And yet, sir, what you would have thought a notable madness, is to-day a startling reality with which I leave you face to face.

9, 10. (9) **awake,** *etc.*, either the appeal of Jehovah to Himself, or the impassioned prayer of the exiled Jews.[a] **ancient days,** Ps. xliv. 1. **Rahab,** "the proud," is Egypt. **dragon,** the crocodile of the Nile, the emblematic beast of Egypt.[b] **dried the sea,** ch. l. 2.

The Church pleading with God (*v.* 9, 10).—Consider the words—I. As expressing the desires of God's ancient Church. The terms used are not in themselves improper, nor was there anything unbecoming in their pleas. II. As affording a pattern for God's afflicted people in all ages. It teaches—1. That we should bear in remembrance God's past mercies; 2. That we should make them the grounds of future expectations. Address: —(1) Those who are humbled under a sense of sin; (2) Those who are bowed down under affliction; (3) Those who despond in relation to the Church.[c]

The intercession of Christ—Amintas and Æchylus.—"A rare illustration of the efficacious intercession of Christ in heaven we have in that famous story of Amintas, who appeared as an advocate for his brother Æchylus, who was strongly accused, and very likely to be condemned to die. Now Amintas having performed great services, and merited highly of the commonwealth, in whose service one of his hands was cut off in the field, he comes into the court, in his brother's behalf, and said nothing, but only lifted up his arm and showed them an arm without a hand, which so moved them that without speaking a word they freed his brother immediately. And thus if you look in Rev. v. 6, you shall see in what posture Christ is represented visionally there as standing between God and us: 'And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain;' that is, bearing in His glorified body the marks of death and sacrifice. Those wounds He received for our sins on earth are, as it were, still fresh bleeding in heaven; a moving and prevailing argument it is with the Father to give us the mercies He pleads for."[d]

11. redeemed, *etc.*, *see* ch. xxx. 10. The repetition of this *v.* indicates that both portions of the book of Isaiah were prepared by one author.

The believer's joy (*v.* 11).—The text discloses two particulars

a "In the animated language of poetry, Jehovah is represented as addressing His own omnipotence, and calling for its renewed exercise, for the liberation of His people."—*Henderson.*
"The only probable hypothesis is that which puts the words into the mouth of the people, or of the Prophet as their representative."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b "As God smote Egypt of old, and delivered His people, so He will deliver them now."—*Mat. Arnold.*
The hippopotamus of Egypt was regarded in the Egyptian mythology itself as an emblem of Typhon, the Spirit of Evil."—*Wordsworth.*
v. 9. *Dr. J. Witherspoon,* v. 57; *Dr. Hawcis,* 127.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d Flavel.

v. 11. *D. Gilson,* 483; *B. W. Mathias,* 60; *W. M. Hurle,* 170.

respecting the people of God. I. Their present condition: they are returning unto Zion—1. Because God has redeemed them and called them back; 2. They are returning in joy. II. Their future portion. From the whole subject we infer—(1) The necessity of being born again; (2) The happiness of the dead in Christ.[a]

Note on v. 11.—Is there not here an allusion to the custom so common in the East, of singing upon a journey, particularly with a view to quicken the pace of the camels? "We should not have passed this plain so rapidly, but for the common custom of the Arabs of urging on their camels by singing: the effect is very extraordinary: this musical excitement increases their pace at least one-fourth. First one camel-driver sings a verse, then the others answer in chorus. It reminded me somewhat of the Venetian gondoliers. I often asked the camel-drivers to sing, not only to hasten our progress, but also for the pleasure of hearing their simple melodies. Some of their best songs possess a plaintive sweetness that is almost as touching as the most exquisite European airs. The words are often beautiful, generally simple and natural, being improvisatory effusions. The following is a very imperfect specimen. One takes up the song:—'Ah, when shall I see my family again? the rain has fallen and made a canal between me and my home. Oh, shall I never see it more?' The reply to this and similar verses was always made by the chorus, in words such as these:—'Oh, what pleasure, what delight, to see my family again; when I see my father, mother, brothers, sisters, I will hoist a flag on the head of my camel for joy.'"[b] In describing the order of the caravans, Pitts informs us "that some of the camels have bells about their necks, and some about their legs, like those which our carriers put about their fore-horses' necks, which, together with the servants (who belong to the camels and travel on foot) singing all night, make a pleasant noise, and the journey passes away delightfully." This circumstance is explanatory of the singing of the Israelites in their return to Jerusalem.[c]

12—14. (12) **thou**, fem., addressing Zion. **be afraid**, considering who thy husband and protector is. **a man**, such as the king of Babylon. **as grass**, ch. xl. 6; 1 Pe. i. 24. (13) **forgettest**, *etc.*, and so dost fail of the true trust in Him, wh. would free you from all fear. **oppressor**, lit. "*him that distresseth.*" (14) **captive exile**, or bending prisoner.[a] **hasteneth**, is eager to be, and is just on the point of being. **pit**, or cistern without water, converted into a dungeon. **bread . . fail**, he shall not starve while he waits deliverance.

The comparative fear of God and man (*v.* 12).—I. As to the two parties, Scripture sets forth the nothingness of man and the glory of God. To celebrate this theme the Scriptures employ the grandest machinery, etc. II. In the common intercourse of the world man rather than God is the object of reverence, respect, and fear. III. Consider the question with which these words commence, "Who art thou?"[b]

God's care of His people.—I am fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, and they have taken all from me. What now? Let me look about me! They have left me the sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me; and I can still discourse; and unless I list, they have not taken away my merry coun-

a G. Collins, M.A. "Lay nothing too much to heart; desire nothing too eagerly; rejoice not excessively, nor grieve too much for disasters; be not violently bent on any design, nor let any worldly cause hinder you from taking care of your soul; and remember that it is necessary to be a Christian (that is, to govern oneself by motives of Christianity) in the most common actions of civil life."—*Wilson's Sacra Privata.*

b Bush. Lightning and light may suitably illustrate the difference between the joy of the sinner and the saint. The one is like lightning,—short, hurried, transient, scorching; the other is like light,—lasting, healthful, beautiful, and healing.

c Harmer.

a "Prob. alluding to the custom of putting a prisoner into the five-holed wooden machine which held the body in a bent posture, the head as well as the hands being fixed in it. A more distressing posture cannot well be imagined."—*Henderson.*

vv. 12, 13. *Bp. Smalridge*, 141; *W. Reading*, i. 27; *W. T. Young*, i. 288; *Bp. Heber*, 104.

b H. Woodward, M.A.

tenance, and my cheerful spirits, and a good conscience; they have still left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the Gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them too. And still I sleep and digest, and eat and drink; I read and meditate; I can walk in my neighbour's pleasant fields, and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in that in which God delights—that is, in virtue, and wisdom, and in the whole creation, and in God Himself. The best is left.[c]

15, 16. (15) **divided the sea,** Je. xxxi. 35. (16) **thy mouth,** partly addressed to the restored Israel, and partly to Messiah. **plant,** fig. from fixing up a tent. **heavens,** *i.e.* the new heavens.[a]

The mediation of Christ (*v.* 16).—I. The mission of Christ was reserved until the appointed time. II. It is through a Mediator that the Father has made known His mind and will to the children of men. III. Through the mediation of Christ the foundations of the earth were established. IV. And the heavens were planted. V. The mediation of Christ brings men into a new relation to God.[b]

The Christian reposing in the bosom of Christ—Abelard, Duke of Wurtemberg.—"Several German princes were once extolling the glory of their realm. One boasted of his excellent vineyards; another of his hunting grounds; another of his mines. At last one took up the subject, and said, 'I own that I am a poor prince, and can vie with none of these things; nevertheless, I too possess a noble jewel in my dominion: for were I to be without attendants, either in the open country or wild forests, I could ask the first of my subjects whom I met to stretch himself upon the ground, and confidently place my head upon his bosom, and fall asleep without the slightest apprehension of injury.' Was not this a precious jewel for a prince? However, have something better; for I can rest my head and heart in the lap of God's providence, and upon the bosom of Jesus Christ my Lord, with a perfect assurance that neither man nor devil can touch me there."[c]

17, 18. (17) **awake,** *v.* 9. **O Jerusalem,** seen by the Prophet in its terrible desolation: "lying prostrate in death-like stupor." **cup . . fury,** for thy sin. **trembling,** or wh. produces trembling or intoxication: or of astonishment, dizzying horror.[a] (18) **none to guide,** because all her leaders are borne into captivity.

Note on v. 17.—Artificial liquors, or mixed wines, were very common in ancient Italy and the Levant. The Romans lined their vessels with odorous gums, to give their wines a warm bitter flavour: and it is said that several nations of modern times communicate to their wines a favourite relish by similar means. In Greece this is accomplished by infusing the cones of the pine in the wine vats. Hasselquist says they use the sweet-scented violet in their sherbet, which they make of violet sugar dissolved in water; the grandees sometimes add ambergris, as the highest luxury and indulgence of their appetite. The Prophet Isaiah mentions a mixture of wine and water; but it is evident from the context that he means to express by that phrase the degenerate state of his nation; and consequently, we cannot infer

c Jer. Taylor.

"Love has power to give in a moment what toil can scarcely reach in an age."—*Goethe.*

a Is. lxv. 17. "The new creation thus announced can only mean the reproduction of the Church in a new form, by what we usually call the change of dispensations."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b H. J. Bevis. "Will you follow Christ, and will you desire to be worthy of His leadership, by slinking away from suffering? Do not seek it; but if it comes, remember that no sorrow comes but with His knowledge. If He does not draw the golden bow that sends the silver arrow to your heart, He knows it is sent, and sees it fall."—*H. W. Beecher.*

c Gotthold.

a Ps. lx. 3.

v. 17. *J. C. Dieteric*, 602.

"The Prophet tells us, He shall arise with healing in His wings, or in His rays or beams, which are as the wings of the sun. Christ came as the sun, to bring not only light to a dark world, but health to a diseased, distempered world. The Jews, saith Dr. Pocock, have a proverbial saying, 'As the sun

from it, the use of diluted wine in those countries. It is observed by Thevenot, that the people of the Levant never mingle water with their wine at meals, but drink by itself what water they think proper, for abating the strength of the wine. While the Greeks and Romans by mixed wine always understood wine diluted and lowered with water, the Hebrews, on the contrary, meant by it wine made stronger, and more inebriating, by the addition of powerful ingredients, as honey, spices, defrutum, or wine inspissated, by boiling it down to two-thirds or one half of the quantity, myrrh, opiates, and other strong drugs. The Greeks were no strangers to perfumed and medicated wines; for in Homer, the far-famed Helen mixed a number of stupefying ingredients in the bowl, to exhilarate the spirits of her guests that were oppressed with grief; the composition of which, the poet says, she learnt in Egypt. Of the same kind was the spiced wine mentioned in the Song of Solomon; and to this day such wines are eagerly sought by the people of Syria and Palestine. The drunkards in Israel preferred these medicated wines to all others: "Who hath woe?" said the wise man, "who hath contentions? who hath sorrow? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." Nor were the manners of that people more correct in the days of Isaiah; for he was directed to pronounce a "woe unto them that rose up early in the morning, that they might follow strong drink; that continued until night, till wine inflamed them." This ancient custom furnished the holy Psalmist with a highly poetical and sublime image of Divine wrath: "For in the hand of the Lord . . . a cup: and the wine is red; it is full of mixture." The Prophet Isaiah uses the same figure in one of his exhortations: "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out." The worshippers of the beast and his image are threatened with the same fearful punishment: "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation." The Jews sometimes acidulated their wine with the juice of the pomegranate; a custom to which the spouse thus alludes: "I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate:" or of wine mixed with the juice of that fruit. Prepared in this way, it proves a cooling and refreshing draught in the heat of summer, and by consequence, highly acceptable to an Oriental.[b]

19, 20. (19) **two things,** "desolation and destruction of the land is one of the two things; famine and slaughter of the people the other."[a] (26) **wild bull,** *oryx*, an animal of the antelope species, which, in the East, is still caught in a net.[b]

Note on v. 20—*Famine and wretchedness.*—What a graphic picture we have here of an Eastern city or town in time of famine! See the squalid objects: in their despair they rush forth, throw themselves down in the streets, and there they remain till they die, or are relieved. They have scarcely a rag left to defend them from the heat of the sun or the dew of the night; and they court death as a blessing. Ask them why they lie there; they reply, "To die!" Tell them to get out of the way, and they answer not again; and so great is their indifferisceth infirmities decrease: the flowers which drooped and languished all night revive in the morning.' Christ came into the world to be a great Physician, yea, and the great medicine too, both the balm in Gilead and the Physician there. When He was upon earth He went about as the sun in his circuit, doing this good: 'He healed all manner of sickness and diseases among the people;' He healed by wholesale, as the sun doth." — *M. Henry.*

"What fury of late has crept into our feasts! What honour given to the drunkenest guests! What reputation to bear one glass more, when oft the bearer is borne out of door!" — *Johnson.*

b Paxton.

"My love is so true that I can neither hide it where it is, nor show it where it is not."—*Dryden.*

a Mat. Arnold.

b "Swift, and strong, and handsome; but hunted down into the net; and now exhausted with fruitless attempts to escape."—*Spk. Com.*

c Roberts.

a Je. xxv. 15–29; Ze. xii. 2.

ence, that many of them would literally be crushed to death rather than make the least effort to preserve life.[c]

21—23. (21) **afflicted,** *etc.*, ch. xxix. 9. dizzy and staggering. (22) **taken . . trembling,** fig. for removing the Divine punishment. (23) **but . . thee,** ch. xlix. 26.[a] **laid . . ground,** conquerors often actually trod on the necks of conquered kings.[b]

Note on v. 23.—*The Dosch.*—This passage refers to the ancient practice of setting the foot upon the necks of captives and trampling them under feet, an act by which conquerors signalised triumph over their enemies. A custom which would appear to be a relic of this practice exists amongst the Durweeshes of Cairo, and is celebrated at certain periods as a religious ceremony, called the Doseh, or treading.

b "An Eastern custom, called the *Dosch*, still prevalent or only recently extinct, explains this allusion. Dervishes lay themselves down side by side on the ground, backs upward, legs extended, and their arms placed together beneath their foreheads. Over these the Sheikh on horseback rides."—*Lane.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-SECOND.

1. **awake,** ch. li. 9, 17. **thy strength,** ch. xlv. 24. Arouse thee from thy depression, and put on thy confidence in God. Take courage. **beautiful garments,** holiday attire, as for a day of victory and joy. **holy city,** ch. xlviii. 2. **uncircumcised,** *etc.*,[a] epithets to distinguish the heathen nations, such as the Babylonians.

The strength and beauty of the Church (v. 1).—I. The alarm sounded. 1. The impenitent sinner is as one asleep; 2. The lethargic Christian requires to be awakened; 3. The discouraged and despondent disciple needs reviving. II. The directions given. 1. Distinct apprehension of the atonement; 2. Reliance on the Saviour's righteousness; 3. Communion with the Holy Spirit; 4. Manifestation of the Christian graces; 5. Exercise of believing fervent prayer. III. The dwelling-place described. 1. The Church is a city: 2. Heaven is a city.

Note on v. 1.—Jerusalem had long been afflicted by her foes, but the time of her deliverance was at hand, and in token of that she was to deck herself in her glorious attire. At the time of famine, sickness, or sorrow, the people clothe themselves in their meanest apparel, and their ornaments are laid aside: but on the return of prosperity, they array themselves in their most "beautiful garments."[b]

a Na. i. 15.

v. 1. *H. Draper*, iii. 161; *W. Buswell*, 100.

"There is a degree in Christianity, to the which whosoever cometh, they see and feel more than others can do. 'Come and see' will speak better things of Him than I can do, 'Come nearer' will say much."—*Rutherford.*

b *Roberts.*

2, 3. (2) **dust,** figuring Zion as a captive lying prostrate in the dust." **arise,** stand up. **sit down,**[b] as opposed to crouching, or lying down, as a captive or a mourner. Occupy an elevated seat, and to do so she must first "arise." **bands . . neck,** yoke of captivity. Animals are usually fastened by the neck.[c] (3) **for nought,** ch. l. 1. Babylon had seized Israel, but was not its purchaser, so it had no legal rights over Israel. **without money,** ch. lv. 1.

Bondage and redemption (v. 2).—I. Here notice man's fallen and sinful state. 1. What ye have sold; 2. To whom have ye sold yourselves? 3. For what have ye sold yourselves? 4. Who sold you? II. Man's redemption by Christ Jesus. 1. The redemption of the soul by price; 2. This redemption is also by prayer. Apply:—(1) Man's sinfulness and misery entirely of himself, his salvation entirely of Jesus; (2) All mankind the bondslaves of Satan, or the freemen of the Lord; (3) The price of our redemp-

a Comp. Job ii. 12, 13.

b "In a more dignified place; on a divan, or a throne."—*Louth.*

"As a queen on a throne."—*Targum.*

c "Better rend. 'the bands of thy neck are unloosed;' they have fallen off at the sound of God's voice."—*Spk. Com.*

tion should lead us to value our souls; (4) We have no evidence of our interest in redemption unless we have felt its power in our deliverance from sin.[d]

Note on v. 2.—The other point illustrated occurs in the second verse of this chapter, where the sense of the last expression is, to an Oriental, extremely natural: "Shake thyself from the dust, arise, sit down, O Jerusalem." It is no uncommon thing to see an individual, or a group of persons, even when very well dressed, sitting with their feet drawn under them, upon the bare earth, passing whole hours in idle conversation. Europeans would require a chair: but the natives here prefer the ground. In the heat of summer and autumn, it is pleasant to them to while away their time in this manner, under the shade of a tree. Richly-adorned females, as well as men, may often be seen thus amusing themselves. As may naturally be expected, with whatever care they may, at first sitting down, choose their place, yet the flowing dress by degrees gathers up the dust; as this occurs, they, from time to time, arise, adjust themselves, shake off the dust, and then sit down again. The captive daughter of Zion, therefore, brought down to the dust of suffering and oppression, is commanded to arise and shake herself from that dust; and then, with grace, and dignity, and composure, and security, to sit down; to take, as it were, again, her seat and her rank amid the company of the nations of the earth, which had before afflicted her and trampled her to the earth. It may be proper to notice that Bishop Lowth gives another rendering, "Arise, ascend thy lofty seat," and quotes Eastern customs to justify the version: but I see no necessity for the alteration, although to English ears it may sound more appropriate. A person of rank in the East often sits down upon the ground, with his attendants about him.[e]

4—6. (4) down to Egypt, Ge. xlvi. 6. sojourn, tarry during famine-time; but Egypt put her guests under bitter bondage. the Assyrian, the word used is *Asshur*, wh. includes the Assyrian bondage of Israel, and the Babylonian bondage of Judah.[a] (5) what . . here, as if God were taking special notice of the misery of His people. for nought, by causeless, gratuitous oppression. them to howl, or, a howling, shouting, triumphing over them.[b] (6) know my name, by My acting in accordance with My name, as Israel's God.[c]

Moral slavery the greatest.—There can be no greater slavery than that of the individual over whom his own passions and his own habits domineer. Can he be called his own master, who is always at the bidding of an imperious lust, and must yield to an appetite whenever it solicits gratification? Is it the fine form of civil government beneath which that man lives, or is it the total absence of external restraint, which will induce you to pronounce that man free who is governed by his own inward corruption, so that he cannot withstand the desires of the flesh? Is the ambitious man a free man, who cannot refuse to follow the phantom which beckons him? Is the covetous man a free man, whom money compels to drudge for it, and yet forbids to use it? Is the sensual man a free man, who has so little power over himself that he cannot abstain from his pleasures even when sure of their proving his tormentors? It is idle to talk of liberty, whilst you are the servants of sin. I may cross seas and mountains to

d Studies for Pulpit.

v. 3. *Dr. Donne*, v. 633; *Bp. Sanderson*, 449; *Dr. N. Marshall*, iii. 1; *A. Roberts*, ii. 1.

"See the poor prisoners; see mothers bereft of their children, or wives of their husbands; they roll themselves in the dust, and there make their bitter lamentations. The holy city had figuratively been in the dust, but she was now to arise, to take the shackles from her neck, and to sit down in the place prepared for her."—*Roberts.*

e Jowett.

a Delitzsch.

b "Now, says God, this is not to be suffered. I will go down to deliver them; for what honour, what rent, what tribute of praise have I from the world, when My people, who should be to Me for a name and a praise, are to Me for a reproach? For their oppressors will neither praise God themselves, nor let them do it."—*Matt. Henry.*

c Ex. iii. 14, 15, xxxiv. 5, 7.

"Sin is the only thing in the world which never had an infancy, that knew no minority."—*South.*

reach a land of freedom; but if I am myself a tyrant, the prison is everywhere, and nothing but the Gospel of Christ, practically applied, will enable a man to throw off the shackles by which he is naturally bound.[d]

7. **mountains**, ch. xl. 9.[a] **him**, the Messiah, then any ministers, or messengers of God.[b] **thy God reigneth**, comp. the message of John the Baptist, and of Jesus, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Publishing the Gospel (*v.* 7).—I. We may consider this passage as an epitome, outline, or index to the Gospel. 1. It is good tidings; 2. It is a message of peace; 3. It is a message of salvation. II. The publishing of the Gospel. 1. This is by preaching it; 2. For this certain rules are laid down. III. The publishers of the Gospel. 1. They are men; 2. The manner in which they should be estimated. Appeal to men to hear, believe, and live the Gospel.[c]

Note on v. 7.—Small feet are considered beautiful in all parts of the East. The feet of kings and holy people are spoken of in preference to the other parts of the body. His majesty of the Burmese empire is always mentioned as the "golden feet." "My messenger will soon return, he will bring me good tidings; his feet will be glorious." "Ah! when will the feet of my priest return this way: how glorious is their place!" "Are you in health?" asks the holy man. "Yes; by the glory of your feet," is the reply. "Ah! Swamy, it is a happy circumstance for me that your feet have entered my house."[d]

8. **thy watchmen**, "Persons set on towers separated by intervals to give the earliest notice of the approach of any messenger with tidings."[a] **eye to eye**, close to one another, and so clearly.[b] **bring again Zion**, or, return to Zion.[c] "Bringeth back His Shekinah to Zion."[d]

Note on v. 8.—The phrase, "see eye to eye," is that which we propose to explain, and the preceding verse should be read in order to show more clearly the connection. The whole passage is a prediction of Gospel times; it points to the proclamation of the joyful and welcome tidings which constituted the burden of our Saviour's preaching, and that of his Apostles. In the poetical style of the East, the watchmen are represented as standing upon their watch-tower, or post of observation, and stretching their vision to the utmost point of the horizon, as if in eager expectation of the appearance of a news-bearing messenger. On a sudden the wished-for object appears in sight, on the summit of the distant mountain, speeding his rapid way to the city, while the watchmen, anticipating the tenor of his tidings, burst forth in a shout of gratulation and triumph. "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice: with the voice together shall they sing." The imagery strikingly represents the expectant attitude and heedful vigilance of the believing part of the teachers and pastors of the nation of Israel on the eve of the Messiah's manifestation. The reason of the outbreak of their holy joy is immediately given: "For they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion," *i.e.* they shall have a clear and unclouded discernment of the actual execution of the Divine purposes. As faithful watchmen, intent upon their duty, and earnestly looking out for the signs of promise,

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d *II. Melvill.*

a "The Prophet beholds a messenger coming over the mountains (wh. stand around Jerusalem, Ps. cxxv. 2) with glad tidings; the watchmen of Zion discern him at a distance, and they exult at the sight, and call on her to rejoice."—*Wordsworth.*

b Ro. x. 15; Na. i. 15.

c *Dr. A. Fletcher. v. T. T. Boudler,* i. 133; *Dr. H. Pearson,* 23; *T. Dwight,* ii. 499; *A. W. Hare,* i. 251; *Bp. Kaye,* 583.

d *Roberts.*

a *Fausset.*

b *Gesenius.*

Nu. xiv. 14.

"Nothing is more natural than for one person whose feelings are elated with joy, to look to the glistening eyes of another who is equallyinterested in the cause by which it is produced."—*Henderson.*

c *Maurer.*

d *Targum.*

"A believer's watchfulness is like that of a soldier. A sentinel posted on the walls, when he discerns a hostile party advancing, does not attempt to make head against them himself, but informs his commanding officer

they shall be favoured with a clear, distinct, luminous perception of the objects of their gaze, in which they shall be honourably distinguished from a class of watchmen spoken of by the same Prophet, ch. lvi. 10, of whom it is said, "His watchmen are blind;" instead of seeing clearly, they see nothing. That this is the genuine force of the expression, "they shall see eye to eye," is to be inferred from the parallel usage, Num. xiv. 14, "For they have heard that thou, Lord, art among this people; that thou, Lord, art seen face to face" (Heb. eye to eye); *i.e.* in the most open, evident manner. Of equivalent import are the expressions, Ex. xxx. 11, "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Num. xii. 8, "With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches;" where the latter part of the verse is exegetical of the former. We conclude, therefore, that the words do not in their primary and most legitimate sense imply a perfect unanimity of religious or doctrinal belief in the watchmen, or spiritual guides, of the Christian Church. At the same time, though not expressly taught in this passage, it is but reasonable to expect that, in proportion as the prosperity of the Church advances, truth will be more clearly discerned, and there will be a constant approximation among the pious to a uniform standard of theological faith.[c]

of the enemy's approach, and leaves him to take the proper measures against the foe. So the Christian does not attempt to fight temptation in his own strength; his watchfulness lies in observing its approach, and in telling God of it by prayer."—*W. Mason.*

c Bush.

"They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it."—*William Penn.*

9, 10. (9) **waste places,** or ruins. **comforted,** with signs of His restoring grace. **redeemed,** to be taken both in a national and spiritual sense. (10) **holy arm,** "metaphor from warriors who bare their arm for battle.[a]

Note on v. 10.—The right arm or shoulder is always alluded to as the place of strength: with that the warrior wields his sword, and slays his foes. The metaphor appears to allude to a man who is preparing for the battle: he takes the robe from his right arm, that being thus uncovered, "made bare," it may the more easily perform its office. "Tell your boasting master to get ready his army, for our king has shown his shoulder," *i.e.* uncovered it. "Alas! I have heard that the mighty sovereign of the neighbouring kingdom has pointed to his shoulder," *i.e.* he is ready to come against us. See two men disputing; should one of them point to his right arm and shoulder, the other will immediately fall into a rage, as he knows it amounts to a challenge, and says, in effect, "I am thy superior." Thus may be seen men at a distance, when defying each other, slapping each his right hand or shoulder. Jehovah, in reference to the nations of the earth, "hath made bare His holy arm." "And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."[b]

a Eze. iv. 7.

"A holy arm because His omnipotence is used in vindicating His holiness and righteousness, and in punishing those who are unholy and unrighteous."—*Wordsworth.*

Ps. xcviii. 3; Lu. iii. 6.

v. 10. *J. M. Wynyard,* 402; *J. Johnson,* I. 389.

b Roberts.

11, 12. (11) **from thence,** *i.e.* from Babylon, on the march back to the Holy Land. **no unclean thing,** connected with the idolatries and defilements of Babylon. **bear . . vessels,** the Temple vessels, which Cyrus restored to the returning Jews.[a] (12) **with haste,** as they did from Egypt,[b] so they could have no excuse for carelessness. **Lord . . rereward,** indicating a solemn and public procession.

Freedom purchased.—Gen. Fisk describes the sale of a pious old slave as follows: "How much for this old man?" said the glib auctioneer. "Here is a fine man, honest, faithful, a good preacher: how much? how much? Gentlemen, bid something!

a Ezr. i. 7, 8.

b Ex. xii. 39; De. xvi. 3.

"When they came out of Egypt, they brought with them the idolatrous customs of Egypt (Eze. xxiii. 3), which were their

ruin: let them take heed of doing so now that they were come out of Babylon."—*Mat. Henry.*

"There is nothing so likely to produce peace as to be well prepared to meet the enemy."—*Washington.*

a "This and the two foll. *vv.* form the text on which ch. liii. may be said to be a commentary."—*Henderson.*

"The ancient Jews always connected these three *vv.* with what follows in the liii. ch., and applied them to the same person, the Messiah."—*Wordsworth.*

"In this prophecy Isaiah speaks so plainly of Christ, that he seems to perform the part of an evangelist, rather than a prophet."—*S. Jerome.*

b "Old French *estonner*, from *ex* and *tonare*. The stunning of the faculties by fear or surprise conveys the ordinary idea of the word." — *Woolrych.*

c "'Many nations shall be in admiration of Him.'" — *Greek Trans.*

d Roberts.

e Paxton.

Twenty-five dollars is bid: twenty-five, twenty-five only, for this excellent servant? Thirty is bid; thirty, thirty, forty. do I hear forty? Forty; fifty? fifty; sixty? sixty; sixty-five? sixty-five." The old man's heart beat quick: his eyes were flooded with tears. He had laid up a little money, hoping to buy himself, and die free; his fortune was already nearly reached, the bids were running him up beyond his own means. In a clear voice, dictated by hope, he cried aloud, "Seventy!" The slave-buyers stood aghast: the moral effect stilled the crowd. "Seventy, seventy," cried the auctioneer; "seventy, seventy, and —done!" Precious purchase! he was free who had always been a slave.

13—15. (13) **my servant**, evidently the Prophet here passes away in thought from the return under Sheshbazzar's leadership, to the times and deliverance of Messiah.[a] **prudently**, with meek and calm wisdom. Marg. renders. *shall prosper.* **extolled**, or praised, Ph. ii. 6—9. (14) **astonied**, Ezr. ix. 3, older form of our word *astonished.*[b] **visage**, *etc.*, comp. ch. l. 6. **more than**, better, *unlike a man's.* (15) **sprinkle**,[c] fig. for purify, so redeem. **shut . . mouths**, sign of reverence: dumb with awe. **not told**, Ro. xv. 21.

Note on v. 15.—At an Eastern feast a person stands near the entrance with a silver vessel, which is full of rose-water, or some other perfumed liquid, with which he sprinkles the guests as they approach, as if from a watering-pan. The object is to show they are now the king's, or the great man's guests: they are in his favour and under his protection. So shall the eternal Son of God sprinkle many nations, and admit them into His presence in token of their purification, and of His protection and favour. The kings of the earth shall no longer rebel against Him; but "shall shut their mouths" to denote their submission and respect.[d] When the company were ready to separate, a servant entered and sprinkled them profusely with rose-water, as a valedictory mark of his master's regard. In some places, this was done at the beginning of the entertainment, and was considered as a cordial welcome. Mr. Bruce informs us, that when he rose to take his leave of an Eastern family, he "was presently wet to the skin, by deluges of orange-flower water." "The first time," says Niebuhr, "we were received with all the Eastern ceremonies (it was at Rosetta, at a Greek merchant's house), there was one of our company who was excessively surprised when a domestic placed himself before him, and threw water over him, as well on his face as over his clothes." It appears from the testimony of both these authors, that this is the customary mode of showing respect and kindness to a guest in the East. The Prophet Isaiah seems to refer to this custom in a passage where he describes the character and functions of the Messiah: "So shall He sprinkle many nations, the kings shall shut their mouths at Him."[e]

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-THIRD.

1, 2. (1) **our report**, ch. lii. 7.[a] **to whom**, among the unbelieving Jews. **arm**, ch. lii. 10. (2) **tender plant, suckling.**[b] **root**, for that which springs from the root. **dry ground**, implying a feeble sickly growth.[c] **no form, no striking features**

a Comp. Is. xlix. 1–8. l. 7—11; Jno. xii. 38; Ro. x. 16.

b "Here a sucker, or shoot sprout-

to draw men's attention merely to His person. The supposed likenesses of Christ wh. have come down to us are all untrustworthy.

Christ's sufferings and glory (*v.* 1).—The ancient prophecies are justly included among the evidences of the Christian religion; those which relate to Christ generally refer to His sufferings and glory. I. The report here spoken of. 1. Its general contents; 2. Its great importance. II. How we are required to believe it. 1. Practically, with our hearts unto righteousness: 2. Seasonably, without delay: 3. Perseveringly, without declension. III. The effect with which this belief is attended. 1. It delivers from the burden of guilt; 2. It blesses; 3. It keeps; 4. It rewards. Apply:—(1) The faith and knowledge of salvation are connected; (2) The hope of believers is demanded and encouraged.[d]

Note on v. 1.—In these parts of the world, the fashion is in a state of almost daily fluctuation, and different fashions are not unfrequently seen contending for the superiority; but in the East, where the people are by no means given to change, the form of their garments continues nearly the same from one age to another. The greater part of their clothes are long and flowing, loosely cast about the body, consisting only of a large piece of cloth, in the cutting and sewing of which very little art or industry is employed. They have more dignity and gracefulness than ours, and are better adapted to the burning climates of Asia. From the simplicity of their form, and their loose adaptation to the body, the same clothes might be worn with equal ease and convenience by many different persons. The clothes of those Philistines whom Samson slew at Ashkelon required no altering to fit his companions; nor the robe of Jonathan to answer his friend. The arts of weaving and fulling seemed to have been distinct occupations in Israel, from a very remote period, in consequence of the various and skilful operations which were necessary to bring their stuffs to a suitable degree of perfection; but when the weaver and the fuller had finished their part, the labour was nearly at an end; no distinct artisan was necessary to make them into clothes; every family seems to have made their own. Sometimes, however, this part of the work was performed in the loom: for they had the art of weaving robes, with sleeves all of one piece: of this kind was the coat which our Saviour wore during His abode with men. These loose dresses, when the arm is lifted up, expose its whole length. To this circumstance the Prophet Isaiah refers. "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"—uncovered—who observes that He is about to exert the arm of His power?[e]

3. **despised**, ch. xlix. 7. **rejected of men**, Heb. prob. means, *ceasing to be of men*,[a] forsaken of men.[b] **man of sorrows**, *i.e.* of manifold and special sorrows.[c] **grief**, or sickness.[d] **hid . . faces**, in contempt and disgust. "As a thing before which a man covers his face in disgust."[e]

The Man of sorrows (*v.* 3).—I. His sorrows arose from the felt relation of a loving being to a ruined race. II. From the crushing pressure of His mediatorial work. III. From His certain knowledge that the result of His mission would not be equal to the benevolence of His will.[f]—*The suffering Saviour.*—I. His life began with persecution and peril. II. His deep condition of earthly abasement. III. The vile suspicions and bitter misrepre-

ing up from the root of a tree that has been cut down to the ground." — *Henderson.*

"Not a *tender* plant, which implies beauty, delicacy, and fostering care, but a *slender* plant, thin and insignificant." — *Mat. Arnold.*

c "In arid lands nearly all the plants have tuberous roots, buried far beneath the ground, beyond the scorching effects of the sun, and composed of succulent tissue, fitted with a deliciously cool and refreshing fluid. It may have been one of these that suggested to the Prophet this beautiful and expressive emblem."—*Hugh Macmillan.*

d Alpha in 400 Sks.

v. 1. *H. King*, 1; *W. Reading*, iii. 27; *T. Boston*, x. 269; *E. Cooper*, vii. 68; *T. Blackley*, ii. 235; *Dr. J. Donne*, i. 106.

e Paxton.

a "Of so mean appearance that he was 'no longer reckoned with men.'" — *Aben Ezra.*

b Gesenius.

c "Bodily and mental, proceeding from a perfect sense of the heinousness of sin in God's sight, the depths of which no mind

of man has ever fathomed." — *Wordsworth.*

"'One continued chain of labour, sorrow, and consuming pain.'" — *Sir R. Blackmore.*

d "So worn and macerated was He with continual grief that when He was but a little above 30 years of age, He was taken to be nearly 50. Jno. viii. 57." — *Mat. Henry.*

"It is remarkable Jesus is not mentioned as having ever suffered from sickness." — *Fausset.*

e Hengstenberg.

f Evan Lewis, B.A.

g J. Burns, D.D.

v. 3. *Bp. Sherlock,* ii. 332; *J. Newton,* iv. 198; *Dr. A. Rees,* iv. 111; *J. Jewett,* i. 357; *R. Walker,* i. 138.

"He who feels contempt for any living thing, hath faculties that he hath never used, and thought with him is in its infancy." — *Wordsworth.*

h Jer. Taylor.

a "The Jews were taught to regard disease (and calamity) as the temporal punishment of sin." — *Henderson.*

b Spk. Com.

c R. V. Price, M.A.

v. A. F. D. Maurice, 289; *J. Puckle,* ii. 161; *Dr. C. P. Layard,* 37; *H.*

sentations He had to bear. IV. He was constantly exposed to personal violence. V. The fierce temptations of the devil. VI. His sufferings were associated with a perfect prescience of all the evils and agonies He had to endure. VII. He saw how they were to culminate from every quarter. 1. Man; 2. Hell; 3. Heaven. Apply:—(1) Their cause: sin; 2. Their result: redemption; 3. His claims: love, gratitude, service. *c*

Christ a Man of sorrows.—All that Christ came for was, or was mingled with, sufferings: for all those little joys which God sent, either to recreate His person, or to illustrate His office, were abated or attended with afflictions: God being more careful to establish in Him the covenant of sufferings, than to refresh His sorrows. Presently after the angels had finished their hallelujahs, He was forced to fly to save His life, and the air became full of the shrieks of the desolate mothers of Bethlehem for their dying babes. God had no sooner made Him illustrious with a voice from heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him in the waters of baptism, but He was delivered over to be tempted and assaulted by the devil in the wilderness. His transfiguration was a bright ray of glory; but then also He entered into a cloud, and was told a sad story, what He was to suffer at Jerusalem. And upon Palm Sunday, when He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, and was adorned with the acclamations of a King and a God, He wet the palms with His tears, sweeter than the drops of manna, or the little pearls of heaven that descended upon Mount Hermon, weeping, in the midst of this triumph, over obstinate, perishing, and malicious Jerusalem. For this Jesus was like the rainbow, which God set in the clouds as a sacrament to confirm a promise and establish a grace; He was half made of the glories of the light, and half of the moisture of a cloud; in His best days He was but half triumph and half sorrow: He was sent to tell of His Father's mercies, and that God intended to spare us; but appeared not but in the company or in the retinue of a shower, and of foul weather. But I need not tell that Jesus, beloved of God, was a suffering person: that which concerns this question most is, that He made for us a covenant of suffering: His doctrines were such as expressly and by consequence enjoin and suppose sufferings, and a state of affliction: His very promises were sufferings; His beatitudes were sufferings: His rewards, and His arguments to invite men to follow Him, were only taken from suffering in this life, and the reward of sufferings hereafter. *h*

4. borne . . sorrows, Mat. viii. 17. The pronoun *He* is emphatic. A strong assertion of the substitutionary character of His work. *griefs* are bodily pains and infirmities: *sorrows* are pains of the mind. **stricken,** judicially: coming under Divine judgment on sin. *a* **afflicted,** "cast into a state of deep and lasting humiliation." *b*

Redemption (*v.* 4).—I. The need,—sheep, but astray. The way lost, *i.e.* he who is on the way is lost. II. The means,—the reality of the redemption seen in the fact that Christ died. III. The effect,—sin atoned for: iniquity borne away: necessity of a personal relation to Christ by faith; depth of His love the measure of our obligation, and as that cannot be fathomed, our obligation can never be fully realised. *c*

A suffering God the preacher's theme.—The Jews and the

Greeks were both ready to receive a God that could shape all the powers of nature, and that could make an illustrious appearance, and address Himself to all that was highest and most admirable in human nature; but to hear preached to them a God who could humble Himself and become a man; who could be subject to those infirmities that inhere in the human condition: who could take death and disgrace upon Him; who could feel weakness, and be willing to feel it; who could feel death, and be willing to feel it—that they could not bear. And we can hardly bear it any better than they could; for we, who believe that Christ is God, dodge the declaration that He died, and change it so that it shall mean something else. We do not like to see it in a hymn, or in a sermon, that God died. And so we attempt to say that it was the human that died in Christ. In other words, there is in us just that same feeling which the ancients had, that there is something which lowers the conception of God to preach that Christ was from God; that His weakness and sufferings and death were part and parcel of a real Divine experience, and typical of the everlasting experience of God; that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world; and that, though we saw it clearly set forth, this had been going on before, and was to go on for ever and for ever. The conception that it is the nature of God not to sit star-crowned, not to sit gazed upon and sung to, not to sit wrapped in chanting and luxurious praise—the conception that God is a living power, projecting and supervising—yea, thinking and loving and sacrificing as much on the throne as on the cross, as much in heaven as on earth—the conception of Divinity as being perfect wisdom, perfect purity, perfect love, and as addressed to the recuperation of the weak and the wicked, working and working, suffering and suffering, labouring and labouring, for ever and for ever,—this conception is yet unwelcome. Our prejudices do not like it. And as it is now, so it was in the time of the Apostle. Therefore he declared all the way, "I preach," not Christ, but "Christ crucified. I will not preach Christ in such a way as that the cross shall be left out." It is this suffering in Christ that is the secret of the Divine power.[d]

5. **wounded**, marg. *tormented;* pierced, with special reference to the piercing of our Redeemer's hands, feet, and side. **bruised**, crush, break in small pieces.[a] **for**, because of; in fulfilment of His purpose to deliver us from our iniquities. **chastisement**, *etc., i.e.* by which our peace has to be won. **stripes**,[b] or bruises, with reference to His scourgings, as part of His great sacrifice.

Spiritual health (*v.* 5).—I. A lamentable disease assumed. 1. The baneful result of transgression; 2. Universal in its prevalence; 3. Hereditary in its descent; 4. Incurable by human energy. II. An infallible physician specified. 1. Infinite in Wisdom; 2. Impartial in attendance; 3. Ever easy of access; 4. Gratuitous in His practice. III. His mode of operation described—"His stripes." The Atonement—1. Divine in its appointment; 2. Easy in its application; 3. Universal in its adaptation; 4. Infallible in its efficacy. IV. An extraordinary cure asserted. 1. Radical in its nature; 2. Convincing in its evidence; 3. Happy in its influence. This subject tends—(1) To promote humility; (2) To produce self-examination; (3) To excite fervent gratitude; (4) To encourage the desponding penitent.[c]

Marriott, i. 332; *R. P. Buddicom*, i. 34; *R. W. Jelf*, 119.

Among the fathers of the Church few hold a higher place than Cyprian. Having been threatened, punished, banished, and recalled, by successive rulers, he was at last, in the year 258 A.D., sentenced to be beheaded. The Emperor Valerianus ordered that he should have sufficient time to consider whether he would not save his life by sacrificing to the gods. He was told that if he would only cast a grain of incense into the fire, his life should be spared. The martyr nobly answered "There needs no deliberation in the case."

d H. W. Beecher.

a "There are no stronger terms in the language than are here used to signify the extremity of the sufferer's affliction."—*Delitzsch.*

b Stripe-wounds, wales.

Mat. xxvii. 26; 1 Pe. ii. 24.

c Omicron in 400 Sks.

v. 5. *G. Burnet*, i. 105; *Dr. J. Rogers*, iii. 123; *J. Farrar. Bamp. Lec.* 29; *Bp. Dehon*, i. 521; *Dr G. Croft*, i. 152; *Dr. W. Bell*, ii. 279.

6. all we, the Prophet speaks in the name of Israel. Penitent confession of believers and of Israel in the last days.[a] sheep . . astray, Ps. cxix. 176; 1 Pe. ii. 25.[b] laid on him, made to light on Him.[c]

Straying (*v.* 6).—We wander—I. Like sheep, without reason—the pasture was rich, the shepherd kind, the fold secure. II. Like sheep, aimlessly. The lion prowls for food, the hart in search of water, the sheep without aim. III. Like sheep, persistently despise the coming shades of evening, the distant bleatings of the abandoned flock, loss of fleece and smarting wounds. IV. Like sheep in peril—defenceless, surrounded by dangers and foes. V. Like sheep—sought; the Good Shepherd calls to us, saying, "Return."[d]

Example of Christ.—When our Saviour was come into the wretched world, of all the numerous miracles recorded in the Gospel. He scarce did any for His own private relief. And to show that as He endured His sorrows for our sakes, that by His stripes we might be healed, so were the joys He tasted in relation to us, we read not (which is highly observable) in the whole Gospel that ever He rejoiced but once, and that was when His returned disciples informed Him that they had victoriously chased devils and diseases out of oppressed mortals, and that, by His authority, men had been dispossessed of both the tempter and punishment of sin.[e]

7. opened . . mouth, Mat. xxvi. 63, xxvii. 12; Mk. xiv. 61, xv. 5. as a lamb,[a] *comp.* Ac. viii. 32.

The sacrifice of Christ (*v.* 7).—I. Behold what manner of love has God the Father shown towards us as sinners against Him. II. Behold the interesting view which the text also affords of Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of such a gracious Father.[b]

A Jewish convert.—A recent tourist in Holland, after having pointed out the fearful desecration of the Sabbath which he witnessed at Rotterdam, states, that in his journeying up the Rhine, he became acquainted with a Dr. B——, a native of Holland, and an intelligent and a pious man, who informed him that a powerful reaction, in favour of evangelical truth, had taken place in Amsterdam and some other places within these few years. This, he said, was chiefly, under God, owing to the exertions of two men, both of them Jews, one in Amsterdam, the other in the Hague. Both were converts to the faith of the Gospel, one a clergyman of the Dutch Church, the other a physician, and both men of vast talents and attainments, and of untiring zeal. They were intimate friends before their conversion; and, unknown to each other, were, about the same time, led to entertain serious doubts regarding their Judaical notions. The same portion of Scripture had arrested the attention of both. That portion was the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Neither could satisfy himself with the Jewish interpretations of that prophecy. They frequently met when their minds were in this unsettled state. But each was afraid to reveal his doubts and fears to the other. Both continued to pursue their inquiries unknown to each other: and the more closely they studied the subject, their doubts, their fears, and distress increased. In this state, they one day met in the house of a mutual friend, and the following scene took place:—One of them opened a Bible which was lying on the table; the place that he read was the fifty-third chapter

a Ze. xii. 10.

b "The antithesis is, in ourselves we were scattered; in Christ we are collected together; by nature we wander, driven headlong to destruction; in Christ we find the way to the gate of life."—*Calvin.*

c *Louth.*

2 Cor. v. 21; Ga. iii. 13; He. ix. 28.

d *Stems and Twigs.*

e *Hon. R. Boyle.*

a Jno. i. 29.

"The Vulgate, wh. throughout this ch. translates so as to heighten the identification with Christ, has here, 'He was offered because He Himself chose to be.'"—*Mat. Arnold.*

"He was oppressed, and He Himself submitted to affliction."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b *E. Phillips, M.A.*

v. 7. *J. Flavel*, i. 358; *Dr. W. Harris*, 385.

"No man can know or conceive what that anguish must have been. If any man began even to experience such suffering, he must die. You know many do die of sickness of heart, for heart anguish is indeed death. If a man could

of Isaiah—"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted," etc. The reader became greatly agitated, and endeavoured, in vain, to conceal his emotion. His friend was as much moved as himself; a single remark revealed in a moment the state of mind of both; a full explanation took place. From that moment they pursued their inquiries together, and the result was, the abandonment, by both, of Judaism, and their conversion to the faith of the Gospel. Dr. Acosta is now the most eminent clergyman in Holland; he has a church in Amsterdam, preaches pure evangelical truth, and that with an eloquence and fervour which, by the blessing of God, has aroused thousands from their lethargy, and constrained them to cry, What shall we do to be saved? The other is a physician at the Hague, and is one of the most eminent in the land. He, too, labours with indefatigable zeal in spreading abroad the knowledge of Christ. "Dr. B—— assured me," adds the tourist, "that, of his own knowledge, there were at least 5,000 true Christians in Amsterdam alone. The movement had spread to other cities, and similar effects had, in proportion, been produced."[c]

feel such anguish and distress as Christ felt, it would be impossible for him to endure it, and for his soul to remain in his body. Soul and body would part. To Christ alone was this agony possible, and it wrung from Him 'sweat wh. was as great drops of blood.'"—*Martin Luther*, 1530.

c Whitecross.

8, 9. (8) taken . . judgment, *i.e.* "taken away from prison and judgment to a violent death."[a] "By violence wh. cloaked itself under the formalities of a legal process."[b] "By an oppressive judgment He was taken off."[c] generation, *i.e.* who of His contemporaries recognised the true meaning of His death? cut off, by an untimely and violent death. (9) grave . . wicked, render, "one appointed," as indicating the malicious intention of the Jews.[d] rich, Mat. xxvii. 57. death, word only used in Eze. xxviii. 10, and there for a violent death.

a Mat. Arnold.
b Spk. Com.
c Lowth.
d "Our Saviour was destined by the Jews to have the ignoble burial of those who underwent capital punishment."—*Henderson.*

Messiah stricken for man's transgression (*v.* 8).—I. The text predicts of Messiah that He should suffer and die for transgression. II. The affecting description in my text portrays Messiah stricken for our transgression. III. The voice of God speaking through His Prophet declares that all these sufferings were endured "for the transgressions of His people."[e]

e T. Woodward.
v. 8. *Bp. Nicholson*, 186; *Dr. W. Raleigh*, 324; *Dr. R. South*, iii. 357; *R. Hall*, v. 73.

10, 11. (10) pleased the Lord, fitted into the great purpose of man's redemption. The men who persecuted and slew Him only carried out a gracious Divine purpose.[a] thou shalt make, better, "when His soul shall make."[b] offering, Heb. *asham*, a guilt-offering. see . . seed, Ps. xxii. 30. xxiv. 6, xxv. 13. The long line of His descendants, though He was a childless man, is the Church of the Christian ages. prolong, *etc.*, therefore He must rise again. (11) travail, fruits of His travail.[c] his knowledge,[d] *i.e.* the knowledge, believing apprehension, of His propitiation.

a Ac. ii. 23, iii. 18.
b Delitzsch.
c "He shall see the fruits of His sufferings in the many whom His life and death have turned to God and saved."—*Mat. Arnold.*
d Or comp. Is. l. 4.

The sufferings of Christ (*vv.* 10, 11).—I. His character. 1. God's servant; 2. A righteous servant; 3. As such, a perfect example, and an acceptable Mediator. II. His sufferings. I. Their extent; 2. Their singularity; 3. Their general nature. III. The happy effects of His sufferings. 1. He shall prolong His days; 2. He shall justify many; 3. He shall see His seed: 4. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand; 5. He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Apply:—(1) Cultivate a spirit of contrition: (2) If penitent, hope for salvation; (3) God's claims on you as the subjects of redeeming grace.[e]

e Alpha in 400 Sks.
v. 10. *S. E. Pierce*, 262; *Bp. Vidal*, 172; *J. Martineau*, i. 155.
v. 10. *W. Bridge*, iii. 199; *Dr. E. Payson*, ii. 152; *Bp. D. Wilson*

The humiliation of Christ.—He that came to save men, is sent

147; *Abp. Sumner*, 146.

"Christ is the righteousness of sinners to God, and the righteousness of God to sinners."—*Venning.*

f Bp. Hall.

for His first lodging to the beasts. The stable is become His inn; the cratch, His bed. O strange cradle of that great King, which heaven itself may envy. How easy had it been for Thee to have made place for Thyself in the throngs of the stateliest courts! Why wouldest Thou be thus homely, but that, by contemning worldly glories, Thou mightest teach us to contemn them? that Thou mightest sanctify poverty to them whom Thou callest unto want? That, since Thou, which hadst the choice of all earthly conditions, wouldest be born poor and despised, those which must want out of necessity might not think their poverty grievous.*f*

12. **divide the spoil**, the rights of a great conqueror.[a] "With the mighty ones shall He portion out the spoil." **his soul**, or life. **numbered with**, and so treated as if He were a transgressor. "He was put on the same footing with the transgressors."

Victory achieved by Christ's death (*v.* 12).—1. Let us consider the death of Christ as appointed of God. 2. Look at it with regard to the identity of this appointment, in God's proposal of salvation, pervading all the Divine dispensations. 3. Consider the absolute necessity of this appointment for fallen man. 4. We have the express declaration of God to this truth, made by His own mouth, by His word, and by His ministers. 5. Consider the absolute necessity of receiving this doctrine. 6. The actual seal that God hath set to His own truth concerning the way of salvation, with the certainty of the effect: because He hath poured out His soul unto death, He shall divide the spoil with the strong.[b]

The Earl of Rochester.—It is well known that this extraordinary man was, for many years of his life, an avowed infidel, and that a large portion of his time was spent in ridiculing the Bible. One of his biographers has described him as "a great wit, a great sinner, and a great penitent." Even this man was converted by the Holy Spirit in the use of His Word. Reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, he was convinced of the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures, the Deity of the Messiah, and the value of His atonement as a Rock on which sinners may build their hopes of salvation. On that atonement he rested, and died in the humble expectation of pardoning mercy and heavenly happiness.[c]

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-FOURTH.

1. **O barren**, ch. xlix. 18—21.[a] **travail**, *comp.* Mic. iv. 10; Is. lxvi. 7, 8. **desolate . . married.** "More are the children of Jerusalem, when she seemed to be a widow, *i.e.* when her Temple and her city were in ruins, than when she was married, *i.e.* when the Temple was still standing, and God's presence was visibly revealed in it."[b]

Joy.— But how shall we be glad?
We that are journeying through a vale of tears,
Encompassed with a thousand woes and fears,
How should we not be sad?

Angels that ever stand
Within the presence-chamber, and there raise
The never-interrupted hymn of praise,
May welcome this command.

"Metaphors borrowed from the ancient military life, in wh. a victorious general had conferred on him, by his monarch, the spoils which he had won, and again distributed them among his soldiers."—*Henderson.*

"Christ is the world's Cyrus."—*Wordsworth.*

Ro. viii. 34; He. vii. 25, ix. 24; 1 Jno. ii. 1.

b R. Cecil, M.A.

v. 12. *J. Flavel*, i. 52; *O. Heywood*, iii. 131; *S. Ogden*, 69; *J. Duche*, ii. 307.

c R. T. S.

a Ga. iv. 27; comp. Ge. xi. 30.

"God's people, thus purged and healed, shall be eternally established; Israel shall extend his borders and multiply his sons; his enemies shall come over to him; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their promised justification through

Or they whose strife is o'er,
Who all their weary length of life have trod,
As pillars now within the home of God,
That shall go out no more.

But we who wander here,
We who are exiled in this gloomy place,
Still doomed to water earth's unthankful face
With many a bitter tear,

Bid us lament and frown,
Bid us that we go mourning all the day,
And we will find it easy to obey,
Of our best things forlorn.

But not that we be glad;
If it be true that mourners are the blest,
Oh! leave us in the world of sin, unrest,
And trouble to be sad.

I spake, and thought to weep,
For sin and sorrow, suffering and crime,
That fill the world, all mine appointed time
A settled grief to keep.

When lo! as day from night,
As day from out the womb of night forlorn,
So from that sorrow was that gladness born,
Even in mine own despite.

Yet was not that by this
Excluded; at the coming of that joy
Fled not that grief, nor did that grief destroy
The newly-risen bliss.

But side by side they flow,
Two fountains flowing from one smitten heart,
And oftimes scarcely to be known apart—
That gladness and that woe.

Two fountains from one source,
Or which from two such neighbouring sources run,
That aye for him who shall unseal the one,
The other flows perforce.

And both are sweet and calm,
Fair flowers upon the banks of either blow
Both fertilise the soil, and where they flow
Shed round them holy balm.[c]

God's righteous servant." — Mat. *Arnold.*

"The reference is to Jerusalem, in wh. no citizens were born during the exile."— *Grotius.*

b Wordsworth.

"In Africa, when we expected an increase of hearers, the Hottentots moved the pins all round, a yard or a yard and half farther from the tent, towards which they stretched the canvas, and fastened it, which considerably increased the room inside."— *Campbell.*

"A Deity believed, is joy begun; a Deity adored, is joy advanced; a Deity beloved, is joy matured: each branch of piety delight inspires." —*Young.*

v. 1. *T. Bowdler,* i. 404.

"Such a sacred and home-felt delight, such sober certainty of waking bliss, I never felt till now."— *Milton.*

c Trench.

2, 3. (2) **enlarge,** *etc.*, bec. increase of people demands enlargement of accommodation.[a] **cords . . stakes,** the cords to keep the tent steady are tied to wooden pegs, or stakes. "As the family increases the tent is proportionally enlarged, and requires the cords to be longer, and the stakes to be stronger in proportion."[b] (3) **right . . left,** prob. here put for northward and southward.[c] Some regard as indefinite expressions, meaning, *in all directions.* **Gentiles,** lands formerly occupied by idolaters.

Joy at finding salvation.—We are told of some Turks, who have, upon the sight of Mohammed's tomb, put out their eyes, that they might not defile them, forsooth, with any common object, after they had been blessed with seeing one so sacred. I

a "So large a family requires that she should rebuild her tent on a far larger scale (Is. xliv. 19, 20)."—*Speaker's Com.*

b Henderson.

c So *Kimchi* and *Knobel.*

Eze. xvi. 46.

d W. Gurnall.

am sure many gracious souls there have been, who, by a prospect of heaven's glory set before the eye of their faith, have been so ravished by the sight, that they desired God even to seal up their eyes by death, with Simeon, who would not by his good-will have lived a day after that blessed hour in which his eyes had beheld the salvation of God.[d]

4, 5. (4) forget the shame, the national apostasy which had brought on them the Divine judgments. widowhood, or time of captivity.[a] (5) is thine husband, and now has come into restored relations with His Church. be called, *i.e.* He shall be universally recognised in those sublime relations which He sustains. Reference is also to God's sustaining these gracious relations to the Church composed both of Jew and Gentile.[b]

Our Maker our Husband (*v.* 5).—I. The general idea here suggested. II. The important particulars contained in it. 1. His union with us; 2. His interest in us; 3. His feeling towards us. Address:—(1) Those who through grace have been brought into this relation to the Deity; 2. Those who know Him not yet under this endearing character.[c]

Meaning of husband.—It means literally "the band of the house," the support of it, the person who keeps it together, as a band keeps together a sheaf of corn. There are many married men who are not husbands, because they are not the band of the house. Truly, in many cases, the wife is the husband; for oftentimes it is she who, by her prudence and thrift and economy, keeps the house together. The married man who by his dissolute habits strips his house of all comfort is not a husband. In a legal sense he is, but in no other: for he is not a house-band: instead of keeping them together, he scatters them among the pawnbrokers.[d]

6—8. (6) called thee, with the full intention of restoring thee to thy lost relations and privileges. wife of youth, fig. for one specially beloved. wast refused, or, after thou hadst been so long despised. (7) small moment,[a] the 70 years of Bab. captivity. great mercies, the greatest tenderness.[b] (8) little wrath, or, an outburst of wrath.[c] everlasting, the strong fig. for abiding, unchanging.

Strong consolation (*v.* 7).—Three particulars in these words. I. The displeasure they intimate. II. The mercy they breathe. III. The confidence which these words encourage. 1. It is God who speaks; 2. There is the oath of God; 3. There is His covenant.

Excellencies of a husband.—

Faithful—as dog, the lonely shepherd's pride:
True—as the helm, the barque's protecting guide
Firm—as the shaft that props the towering dome
Sweet—as to shipwreck'd seaman land and home
Lovely—as child, a parent's sole delight;
Radiant—as morn, that breaks a stormy night;
Grateful—as streams, that, in some deep recess
With rills unhoped the panting traveller bless,
Is he that links with mine his chain of life,
Names himself lord, and deigns to call me wife.[d]

9, 10. (9) for this, *viz.*, this visitation of Divine judgment.[a] sworn, Ge. viii. 21, ix. 11. The promise then made God had

a Je. li. 5; La. v. 3.

"The youth of the Jewish Church was the period of her servitude in Egypt; her widowhood, that of the captivity in Babylon."—*Henderson.*

b Zec. xiv. 9; Ro. iii. 29, 30, xi. 12.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 5. *R. Erskine*, i. 151, x. 115; *G. Whitefield*, v. 171.

d Trench.

a "The period of alienation is not here described as short, but the anger which occasioned it."—*Hitzig.*
b *Henderson.*
c "Breaking forth like a flood, to wh. there is a reference in what follows, and which was of short duration."—*Wordsworth.*
"The wrath is *little*, but the mercies are *great*; the wrath is for a moment, but the kindness is everlasting. See how one is set over against the other, that we may neither despond under our afflictions, nor despair of relief."—*Mat. Henry.*
d *Æschylus.*

a "I deal with

faithfully kept, and as certainly He would keep the new promises made to His people. (10) **mountains**, *etc.*, indicating even greater changes than those caused by flood.[b] **my kindness**, Ps. lxxxix. 2. 28, 33. **covenant . . peace**, "the covenant established by the God of peace:"[c] or "the covenant whereby I have made thee at peace with Me."

The stability of the covenant (*v.* 10).—I. The subject of this stability. The covenant signed and sealed by the inestimable blood of Christ. II. The circumstances of that stability. 1. That the loving-kindness of God continues through all changes; 2. It abides all the convulsions and revolutions incident to human beings; 3. It shall be preserved in all the demonstrations of Divine anger; 4. Its steadfastness in death; 5. The promise extends to the great day of the Lord. III. The reasons of this stability. 1. The character of Him in whom this loving-kindness resides: 2. From the manner in which it is expressed; 3. From the nature of the blessings that covenant secures; 4. From the solemn sanctions and indisputable seals and pledges affixed to it.

11—13. (11) **thou afflicted**, representing God's people by their city, wh. had been so long in ruins. There seems to be blended in the poet's mind references to the perils of the Ark in the waste of waters. **fair colours**, lit. *stibium*, the substance with wh. Eastern ladies anoint their eyelids. The cement of the walls is compared to it.[a] **sapphires**, transparent blue stones. (12) **windows**, or battlements: lit. *suns.*[b] **agates**, or rubies. **carbuncles**, *lit.* sparkling gems.[c] (13) **all . . Lord**, Jno. vi. 45.

Instruction and peace (*v.* 13).—I. The instruction spoken of in the text, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." 1. Nothing of which men are prouder than knowledge; 2. This is the highest knowledge; 3. It has the best teacher; 4. It is extensive. II. The second blessing is peace. 1. Its kind; 2. Its degree. View it in five stages. (1) The relief it brings the conscience under a sense of pollution; (2) Under the afflictions of the righteous; (3) In the hour of death; (4) At the last day; (5) See it in heaven.[d]

Carbuncle.—The carbuncle (Heb. *barcketh*, Gr. *anthrax*) is beautifully bright, and is said to shine in the dark. It is transparent, and of a blood-red colour, and is supposed to be the same with our precious garnet. The ancients call it *anthrax* (charcoal). This most likely arose from the fact that the carbuncle, if held up between the eye and the sun, lost its brightness, and looked like a piece of red-hot charcoal. It is hard as the sapphire, is esteemed in value next to the diamond, and will bear the fire without injury. The garnet consists of nearly equal parts of silica, alumina, and oxide of iron, with traces of manganese. The carbuncle is very rare, and is at present found only in the East Indies. It is generally angular, a quarter of an inch long, and one-sixth of an inch broad. The king of Ceylon is said to have been in possession of a carbuncle, of the brightness of fire, four inches long, and three in breadth! This fact agrees somewhat with the idea of Josephus, who says that the stones of which the breastplate of Aaron was composed were of such superior size and beauty as to put it beyond the power of man to purchase the breastplate. The Arabs have many foolish

My people respecting this their captivity in Babylon as I dealt with them respecting Noah's flood."—*Mat. Arnold.*

"There can no more be another such effusion of My wrath than there can be another deluge, here called the 'waters of Noah,'"—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Mat. xxiv. 35.

c Eze. xxxiv. 25, xxxvii. 26.

v. 10. *Dr. Guyse*, 405.

a "The Prophet compares the cement to this black compound, to intimate that the beauty of the stones would thereby be augmented."—*Henderson.*

2 Ki. ix. 30; Je. iv. 30, only places where the word is used.

b "So called from their radiated appearance."—*Rousset.*

c "These seem to be general images to express beauty, magnificence, purity, strength, and solidity, agreeably to the ideas of Eastern nations, and to have never been intended to be strictly scrutinised, or minutely and particularly explained, as if they had each of them some precise moral and spiritual meaning."—*Lowth.*

d *W. Jay.*

v. 11. *T. Rogers*, ii. 224; *B. Beddome*, v. 14.

v. 13. *Abp. Wake*, iii. 242; *Dr. E.*

superstitions in regard to their precious stones. They believed the carbuncle to possess many wonderful qualities. "It was supposed to be an animal substance, formed in the serpent, which had a most ingenious method of preserving it from the song of the charmer. The distinctions of sex were also ascribed to it: the females threw out their radiance, while the males appeared within like brilliant and burning stars." And the historian De Thou mentions a marvellous carbuncle that was brought by an Eastern merchant to Bologna. Among its surprising properties, he states that it would not suffer itself to be handled with impunity, but hurt those who obstinately struggled with it. If by chance any of it were broken off, it did not appear any smaller. The Arabs also wore the precious stones as a charm against poisons. The language of the Prophet Isaiah (liv. 12) is quite in accordance with Eastern notions of magnificence. The heathen described the palaces of their gods or distant kings as having pillars of red coral, rooms of crystal, ruby doors, thrones of the nine precious stones, and walls of gold surrounded by emerald rivers. Tobit, speaking of the final restoration of Israel, describes the New Jerusalem in the same Oriental manner:—"For Jerusalem shall be built up with sapphires, and emeralds, and precious stones; thy walls, and towers, and battlements with pure gold. And the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with beryl, and carbuncle, and stones of Ophir." We must not, therefore, receive this literally, but as foretelling the great splendour and unrivalled prosperity which the Almighty would put upon His now despised and afflicted people.

Monckhouse, i. 313.

"This figurative way of speaking is in exact keeping with the Eastern notions of magnificence: thus the abodes of the gods, or distant kings, are described as having pillars of red coral; rooms made of crystal; ruby doors; thrones of the nine precious stones; walls of gold, surrounded by emerald rivers. Such passages, therefore, are not to be received literally, but as being indicative of great splendour and unrivalled prosperity."—*Roberts.*

14, 15. (14) righteousness, here faithful fulfilment of promise.[a] shalt be, better, *be thou.* for . . oppression, *i.e.* from suffering oppression. not fear, or have nothing to fear. (15) surely gather, or raise a quarrel.[b] "The Church will be beleaguered by many confederacies of enemies."

[a] Isa. ix. 7, xvi. 5, xxxii. 16.

[b] "The meaning is that whatever enemies might assault the Church, they were not to be viewed as commissioned by God to execute wrath upon her, as the Assyrians and Babylonians had been, and consequently should not succeed in their attempts to remove her."—*Henderson.*

Hervey's recantation.—"If it be shameful to renounce error," says Mr. Hervey, "and sacrifice all to truth, I do very willingly take this shame to myself, in a copy of verses which I formerly wrote, sacred to the memory of a generous benefactor. I remember the following lines:—

> 'Our wants relieved by thy indulgent care
> Shall give thee courage at the dreadful bar,
> And stud the crown thou shalt for ever wear.'

These lines, in whatever hands they are lodged, and whatever else of a like kind may have dropped from my pen, I now publicly disclaim; they are the very reverse of my present belief, in which I hope to persevere as long as I have any being. Far be it from me to suppose that any work of mine should, in order to create my peace, or cherish my confidence, be coupled with Christ's most holy acts. I speak the word of our Church, and I speak the sense of the Prophet, 'I will trust and not be afraid.' Wherefore? because I am inherently holy? Rather God is my salvation; God manifest in the flesh has finished my transgression, and made an end of my sin: and in this most magnificent work will I rejoice. Thy Maker is thy husband: the consequence of which is, all thy debts and deficiencies are upon Him, all His consummate righteousness is upon thee."[c]

Joel, iii. 11, 12; Eze. xxxviii. 18; Re. xx. 9.

[c] *Dr. Cheever.*

16, 17. (16) created the waster, all desolating conquerors

[a] "Destroyers

are as much in God's hands as the smith.[a] (17) **weapon .. tongue**, the two ways in which enmity may be shown, by act and by word. **righteousness**, or justification.[b] **of one**, I will see to it: I will undertake to secure it. If God secures and defends it, we may be sure it is safe from all attacks

The righteous saved from evil (*v.* 17).—I. The armoury of Satan. 1. Persecution; 2. Temptation; 3. False teaching. II. The worldly man's malice. 1. Secret testimony of conscience counteracts it; 2. Good integrity of life disappoints hostility; 3. God will vindicate His people. III. The godly man's vindication. Apply:—(1) Be not disheartened by opposition; (2) Or disarmed by false confidence.

[a] Comp. Jno. vii. 37.

[b] "Under these figures are included all things essential to the spiritual life."—*Calvin.*

[c] "They must *come* and procure it, though it be given away without price."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 1. *J. R. Boultier*, iii. 330; *R. Warner*, i. 132; *T. Butt*, i.; *J. G. Foyster*, 54; *M. Lloyd*, 83; *R. Bingham*, 3; *R. J. Tennant*, 386; *H. Goodwin*, iii. 153.

d *Superville* (*père*).

[a] "The custom of weighing uncoined gobi and silver in mercantile transactions anciently obtained among the Hebrews and other nations; and it still obtains in Turkey and other parts of the East."—*Henderson.*

[b] Pr. xx. 17; Jno. vi. 27.

[c] "The same sure unfailing mercies which I showed to David."—*Mat. Arnold.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-FIFTH.

1. **ho**, a sort of loud trumpet call.[a] **every one**, *comp.* Mat. xi. 28; Jno. iii. 16; Re. xxii. 17. **thirsteth**, with a spiritual thirst, represented by the suffering of the desert-traveller: thirsteth for the "righteousness" spoken of in ch. liv. 17. **waters .. wine .. milk**, combined to express the ideas of refreshment, nourishment, and exhilaration.[b] **buy .. price**, a strong way of saying that all our spiritual need is met by free and sovereign *gifts*. We may have all by seeking.[c]

The offer of salvation (*v.* 1).—I. The blessings offered under the figures of "water," "wine," "milk." 1. They are New Testament blessings; 2. They are spiritual things; 3. Important not to spiritualise too far. Water, the grace of the Holy Spirit—cleanses, refreshes, satisfies; one of the first principles of life. Wine strengthens; milk nourishes. II. The persons to whom these blessings are promised—the thirsty and the hungry. 1. Our natural condition is one of great destitution; 2. It is necessary to feel this. All spiritual blessings are originally both undeserved and undesired; repentance, faith and prayer bear no proportion to gifts of grace. III. Enforce the exhortation. 1. Come; 2. Some things to be done—we have to part with some, and acquire other things; 3. Experimental possession only sufficient.[d]

2, 3. (2) **spend**, *lit.* weigh. Money in those days was not coined.[a] **not bread**, or "bread of deceit."[b] **satisfieth not**, this the true spiritual food of righteousness would do. **good**, pleasant, satisfying. **fatness**, or rich dainties. (3) **incline**, *etc.*, intimating your personal responsibilities. **soul .. live**, for it the food of righteousness is provided. **everlasting covenant**, ch. liv. 10. **sure .. David**, wh. included the reign of Messiah.[c] Lu. i. 32, 33.

Hear (*v.* 3).—I. Attend to the requisition, "Hear." 1. Whom should we hear? 2. How does God speak? 3. How are we to hear? II. The privilege; "hear and your soul shall live." The privilege has four attributes. 1. Spiritual; 2. Vital; 3. Ensured; 4. Personal. Apply:—See the perverseness and folly of men who are insensible to all this; "God speaks once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not."[d]

Unsatisfying food—The nardoo plant.—A strange plant, called the *nardoo*, closely allied to the fern tribe, grows in the deserts of Central Australia. A peculiarly melancholy interest is

and destruction are God's work; they reach those only whom He means them to reach, and He does not mean them to reach Israel."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b Is. lxi. 10.

v. 17. *Dr. W. Tilly*, 91; *H. F. Fell*, 203.

connected with it, owing to the fact that its seeds formed for months together almost the sole food of the party of explorers who a few years ago crossed the Continent. The *nardoo* satisfied their hunger: it produced a pleasant feeling of comfort and repletion. The natives were accustomed to eat it in the absence of their usual roots and fruits, not only without injury, but actually with positive benefits to their health. And yet day after day King and his friends became weaker and more emaciated upon this diet. Their flesh wasted from their bones, their strength was reduced to an infant's feebleness, and they could only crawl painfully a mile or two a day. At last, when nearing the bourne of their hopes, they perished one by one of starvation; a solitary survivor being found in the last extremity under a tree, where he had laid him down to die, by a party sent out in search of the missing expedition. When analysed, the *nardoo* bread was ascertained to be destitute of certain nutritious elements indispensable to the support of a European, though an Australian savage might for a while find it beneficial as an alterative. And thus it happened that these poor unfortunate Englishmen perished of starvation even while feeding fully day by day upon food that served to satisfy their hunger. Is it not precisely so in the experience of those who are seeking and finding their portion in earthly things? They are contented with it, and yet their hunger is in reality unappeased. Their desires are crowned, and yet they are actually perishing of want. God gives them their request, but sends leanness to their souls.[c]

4, 5. (4) given him, first reference to David, final reference to Messiah, David's great successor. witness, or as one who delivers a testimony.[a] Jno. xviii. 37. people, better, peoples, Gentiles. leader, prefect, or prince. commander, or supreme head. (5) knewest not, other, *i.e.*, than the Jews, the chosen people.[b] glorified thee, Acts iii. 13.

The faithful witness (*v.* 4).—Christ is a witness—I. For the declaration of Gospel mysteries. 1. The covenant of salvation; 2. The mystery of Gospel righteousness; 3. The doctrine of providence. II. For the confirmation of Scripture truth. III. For the decision of practical controversies.

The Gospel invitation.—The following extract affords a singular illustration of the invitation of the Prophet. It may serve to take away any impression of its being merely hyperbolic, and at the same time show the full meaning of the text, and its accordance with Eastern manners. Like the poor Arabs, we are wandering, starving wretches; and like them, too, we must lay down our arms, the weapons of our disobedience, before we can reach the proffered bounty. "We were not afraid of the Arabs (whom we met on our way), for when we found any they civilly saluted us, and departed after we had given them some bread and tobacco, which they very courteously desired of us; for they durst not do us any hurt, seeing us guarded by two sheiks, who told them they had answered for us. When we rested in any place to feed, some of them came often, who, having saluted us, immediately began to eat with our Arabs; and when none came, one of the Arabs cried out (as loud as possibly he could) that if any body had a mind to eat they might safely come; and made the proclamation on all sides, so that such as heard the invitation failed not to come, with their half-

v. 2. *J. Slade*, v. 253; *Dr. R. Gordon*, 108; *R. Bingham*, 22.

v. 3. *O. Heywood*, ii. 285; *Bp. Sandford*, 195; *W. Reading*, i. 41; *H. J. Hastings*, 437.

d W. Jay.

"It is a most miserable state for a man to have everything according to his desire, and quietly to enjoy the pleasures of life. There needs no more to expose him to eternal misery."—*Bishop Wilson.*

e H. Macmillan.

a "The term designates the prophetical office of the Messiah, in the discharge of which He communicates to mankind, and to His Church in particular, the saving knowledge of Divine things."—*Henderson.*

b "The most natural supposition concerning this *v.* is, that after speaking of the Messiah, the Prophet turns to Him, and addresses Him directly."—*J. A. Alexander.*

v. 4. *T. Boston*, ix. 128.

vv. 4, 5. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iii. 425.

v. 5. *H. B. Wilson*, 367.

Let your desires be few and simple; then if

pikes, and laying down their arms, fell a-feeding together on the Mafrouca: but there was no necessity for making proclamation at night, for so soon as they saw the fire we made, they came immediately to see what it meant."[c]

6, 7. (6) **seek ye,** prob. addressed specially to the Jews,[a] **while . . near,** Je. vi. 8 The intimation is that God may withdraw His favour from the Jews, and extend it to the Gentiles. (7) **wicked,** *etc.*, comp. ch. i. 16—20. **abundantly pardon,** or multiply to pardon. "God's graciousness is felt more and more the longer one knows Him."

Seeking the Lord (*v.* 6).—I. When is God to be found? When He is near. 1. This life is that only in which God may be found; 2. God is now in us, or far from us, or near us. II. How is God to be sought? 1. By frequenting Christian assemblies; 2. By prayer; 3. By repentance.[b]—*Exhortation to the wicked* (*v.* 7).—I. The counselled. 1. The wicked; 2. The unrighteous. II. The counsel. 1. To abandon their evil habits of action and thought; 2. To return to God in the way which He has appointed. III. The promise annexed to the counsel. 1. Of mercy; 2. Of pardon; 3. Of abundant pardon. Address the impenitent and unbelieving.[c]

8, 9. (8) **not your thoughts,**[a] alluding prob. to the grandeur and comprehensiveness, as well as to the mercifulness, of the Div. thought. (9) **heavens,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. lvii. 10, lxxxix. 2, ciii. 11.

God's thoughts superior to ours (*vv.* 8, 9).—I. They are superior in reference to man, his being, his essence. II. God's thoughts respecting the perils of this being are higher than ours. III. God's thoughts respecting the perfection and restoration of our being are brighter than ours. 1. Man has deep wants, and God can supply these; 2. The same thing may be said of conscience; 3. His thoughts are of mercy.[b]

Means used to bring man to Christ.—When I was a little child I often stood near a forge, and watched the blacksmith at work, admiring the strength and skill of the wonder-working man. He was wont to treat me kindly and bear with me patiently, although I sometimes stood in his way. At one time he would benevolently answer my childish questions, and at another, instead of answering, would continue to handle his tools with his strong, bare arms, throwing glances of tenderness towards me from time to time out of his deep, intelligent eyes, only all in silence. When two pieces of iron, placed in the fire in order to be welded together, became red, I thought and said he should take them out and join them; but he left them lying still in the fire, without saying a word. They grew redder and hotter as they threw out angry sparks: now, thought I, he should certainly lay them together and strike: but the skilful man left them still lying in the fire, and meantime fanned it into a fiercer glow. Not till they were white and bending with their own weight when lifted, like lilies on their stalks—not till they were at the point of becoming liquid did he lay the two pieces alongside of each other, and by a few gentle strokes weld them into one. Had he laid them together sooner, however vigorously he had beaten, they would have fallen asunder in his hands. The Lord knows, as we know not, what preparation we need in order that we may

they are not gratified, you will have less to regret.

c De Thevenot.

a Ps. xxxii. 6; Isa. lxv. 1; Mat. xxv. 1—13; Jno. vii. 34.

"In proclaiming God's loving promises, and the free offers of Div. grace, the Prophet does not forget man's duties both in will and in work."—*Wordsworth.*

b Pierre du Bosc.

c G. Brooks.

a "This and foll. *vv.* reply to those objections that the natural man opposes to the new way of salvation proposed by God, *vv.* 1—3. It may be objected as inconceivable that man can obtain salvation simply by believing, and not by his own works."—*Nägelsbach.*

b Caleb Morris.

"Their thoughts were full of proud self-estrangement, *His* of generous condescending *love*. Their ways were marked by hard-heartedness and treachery; 'all His ways were mercy and truth.'"—*Spk. Com.*

v. 8. *J. Slade*, ii. 94; *R. W. Dibden*, 256, and fol. *vv.* 8, 9. *N. Homes*, 79; *J. Smirin*, i. 225; *J. Barker*, ii. 93; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, i. 319; *Dr. Dwight*, i. 126; *E. Payson*, ii. 31; *J. Foster*, ii. 129.

be brought into union with Himself. He refuses, delays, disappoints, all in wise love, that He may bring the seeker's heart up to such a glow of desire as will suffice to unite it permanently with His own.[c]

10, 11. (10) **snow**, wh. covers plants from frost in winter, and when melted in spring, waters the earth.[a] **returneth not**, in the sense of failing to fulfil its gracious designs. (11) **my word**, of promise concerning Israel, and Messiah.[b]

Resemblance between the Bible and the snow and rain (*vv.* 10, 11).—I. In their origin: African rain-makers, Livingstone, Bible, God's own Book, self-evidencing. II. In their importance: importance of rain, effects of drought, more important is the Bible. III. In the mode of their operation: gradually, nature does nothing at a bound, nor the Bible; influence of Bible truth on the hearts of men, according to nature of soil, need of preparation, connection with use of means, reign of law in the kingdom of grace. IV. In the certainty of their success: success of Bible seen sometimes at once, sometimes after an interval. Apply:—1. We never leave the Church as we enter it; 2. We have great encouragements to circulate the Bible.[c]

12, 13. (12) **go out**, *i.e.* from Bab. captivity. **mountains . . singing**, representing nature as meeting the returning Jews with exulting joy. **clap . . hands**, Ps. xcviii. 8. (13) **thorn**, *etc.*, "nature is represented as undergoing a complete change to indicate the prosperous and happy condition of God's people."[a] **fir tree**, or *cypress*. **brier**, perhaps *nettle*.[b]

Figurative use of trees.—The thorn, the brier, and the thistle are generally used in Scripture to denote any kind of useless and noxious plants that grow spontaneously. In the following instances they are used figuratively:—To denote desolation (Prov. xxiv. 31); the visitation of Providence (Num. xxxiii. 55); and difficulties, hindrances, and troubles (Prov. xv. 19, xxii. 5). The earth was condemned to bring them forth, in the original curse, for an annoyance to the husbandman and an injury to his crop. There is a village called Riphah, in Judæa, which is fenced round with thorn bushes, to prevent the incursions of the Arab robbers; and it really forms a substantial defence for the inhabitants, for neither horse nor man can penetrate without assistance from within. The fir tree is a well-known and valuable evergreen, and once grew with rich luxuriance on the now comparatively bare slopes of Lebanon. It was used in Palestine for ship-building, musical instruments, and parts of sacred edifices. It is now used where great durability is required, and for the manufacture of harps, guitars, and other instruments. It is generally a tall, fine-looking tree, and is used in Scripture to denote power and grandeur. Storks sometimes build their nests in the upper branches. The springing up of a fir is emblematical of verdure and plenty. The myrtle is a beautiful, fragrant, and ornamental evergreen: groves of which are still found in some parts of Palestine. The seeds of one species of myrtle are gathered and dried before they are ripe; and are then called pimento, or allspice. The myrtle in ancient times formed the wreaths for heroes and victors. At the Feast of Tabernacles it was used by the Jews to cover their tents. Thus we find a happy comparison between the thorn and brier, on one hand which denote desola-

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c *Dr. Arnot.*

a "The hearts of men, once barren of spirituality, shall be made, by the outpourings of the Spirit under Messiah, to bear fruits of righteousness."—*Fausset.*

b "This is to be understood first of the Divine mandate given to Cyrus to liberate the captive Jews."—*Henderson.*

c *G. Brooks.*

a *Fausset.*

b So Vulg.

"It is some prickly plant growing freely in the desert."—*Wordsworth.*

"There will be a great change in men's characters; those that were as thorns and briers, good for nothing but the fire, nay, hurtful and vexatious, shall become graceful and useful as the fir tree and the myrtle tree."—*Matt. Henry.*

vv. 12, 13. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iii. 437.

v. 13. *Dr. J. Erskine*, ii. 325; *J. Marriott*, 143.

An opportunity is like a string of stepping-stones across a ford. The traveller, coming up to them, may find the river so swollen with the rains, that the stones are all but covered. If he delay, though his home be on the opposite bank, and full in sight, it may be too late to cross, and he

tion and trouble: and the fir tree and myrtle, on the other, which represent plenty and prosperity. This comparison is used by the Prophet to illustrate the prosperity and glory of the Church,—that Church which our Saviour proclaims His "well-beloved."

may have a journey of several miles to reach his home.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-SIXTH.

1, 2. (1) judgment, or equity. justice, or the right. near to come, *comp.* Mat. iii. 2.[a] salvation . . righteousness, *comp.* Ro. i. 16, 17. (2) keepeth the sabbath, the only part of the Mosaic law wh. the people seem to have kept during the captivity.[b] "The observance of the day of rest is here placed on a level with the performance of moral duties."

Sabbath-keeping and Sabbath-breaking—The Isle of Man.—Linked with the keeping of the Sabbath there are many promises in God's Word of even temporal blessings. Very solemn also are the judgments recorded against those who have polluted this holy day. Between twenty and thirty years ago, the little Isle of Man was a bright example to the surrounding islands. The Manx people then highly reverenced the Sabbath, and their peaceful condition in those days, as contrasted with their present state, will abundantly prove the truth of the words, that in keeping of God's commandments there is great reward. At that time a gentleman from England visited the island, and many years after related some incidents which occurred there which much surprised and impressed him. He had only two or three days to spare, and one of these was a Sabbath. On this day he walked to Peel, one of the principal towns, and historically celebrated for its ancient castle, now in ruins. On arriving he found the streets deserted. There was no busy hum of voices, or sound of carriage-wheels. An air of complete rest and Sabbath stillness reigned, and all things seemed to say, "In six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest holy to the Lord." He wandered to the beach; not a human being was to be seen. There were no boats on the calm and beautiful bay, but several were drawn up high and dry under the cliffs. Where were all the fishermen? At last he discerned two figures seated in the bottom of one of the boats, and on going nearer discovered two sailors busily engaged in reading; the one a Manx, the other an English Bible, which they were thus comparing. The visitor, as his time was short, wished much to visit the old castle; but could not find one boatman who, for any reward, would put out his boat or row the few yards needful on the Sabbath day. They looked at him in wonder when they heard his request, and at last a sailor said, "It is not our custom to put out our boats on the Sabbath, and you will not find a Manx man who will do that for any money." The visitor on this turned his steps to the town, in order, if possible, to purchase some of the pebbles for which the island is famed; but here again he received a merited reproof. Knocking at the door of one of the shops, which were all closed, a man opened it, who, to the request of the gentleman to be shown some pebbles, as he wished to become a purchaser, returned a look of indignation, and replied, "I never sell on the Lord's day; I'll give you a pebble or two, but I'll never sell on the Sabbath." Unheeding words which ought to have spoken loudly

a "The Prophet designedly declares in the present passage that one should not suppose moral uncleanness is compatible with participation in the promised salvation."—*Nägelsbach.*

"The nearer the manifestations of God's mercy, whether in time or in eternity, the louder the call to righteousness of life."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b "During the exile all the services and sacrifices of the Temple had ceased, and the one testimony of faithfulness to their religion wh. the Jews among an idolatrous people could give was the observance of their Sabbath; their Sabbath was the one outward thing wh. brought their religion to their mind. Hence its observance acquired quite a special value."—*Mat. Arnold.*

Ex. xxxi. 14, 16.

vv. 1, 2. *J. Fawcett*, iii. 20.

v. 2. *Dr. J. Orton*, ii. 125; *W. J. E. Bennett*, i. 31; *E. Blencowe*, i. 273.

Of twelve hundred and thirty-two convicts who had been committed to the

Auburn State Prison previously to the year 1838, four hundred and forty-seven had been watermen, either boatmen or sailors — men who, to a great extent, had been kept at work on the Sabbath, and thus deprived of the rest and privileges of that day. Of those twelve hundred and thirty-two convicts, only twenty-six had conscientiously kept the Sabbath.

c Bibl. Treas.

to his conscience, the Englishman sought a car to convey him to Douglas, from which place he was to embark the next morning for England. Here again he met with the most determined opposition, as no car proprietor would hear of sending out his man and horses on the Sabbath day. Money seemed no inducement; they viewed the temptation with scorn, and their looks even seemed to say, "What is your money compared to the worth of our souls? We would not break the Sabbath for any money." Now we may ask what was the condition of this little island when its people obeyed God's commandments, and remembered the Sabbath day to keep it holy? Let it be told in a few words, and those the words of an old resident: "Twenty years ago," he said, "we slept in peace, none making us afraid. We thought not of locking or bolting a single door, for such things as house-breaking and robbery were unheard of." Of late years how is the case altered! Thousands of visitors arrive yearly; the temptations held out have been great, and, alas for the true prosperity of Mona! but too successful. Shops are now open on the Sabbath, boats on the bay and cars with pleasure parties break the holy calm of the once venerated Sabbath day. We can no longer say that locks and bolts are unneeded, for Sabbath-breaking and other crimes have gone hand-in-hand.[c]

3—5. (3) **stranger . . eunuch,** by Mosaic law these were not to enter into the congregation of the Lord.[a] This exclusion was henceforth to cease. **dry tree,**[b] able to bear no fruit unto God's glory. (4) **please me,** sacrificing their own pleasure for Mine. **my covenant,** ch. lv. 3.[c] (5) a place, or memorial, monument. **better . . daughters,** who perpetuate to succeeding generations a father's name. **everlasting name,** illus. in Eunuch of Candace, Acts viii. 27—39.

Acceptance of all true worshippers (*vv.* 4—7).—I. The characters which God approves. 1. Their obedience to His will: 2. Their affiance to His covenant. II. The approbation with which He will honour it. God will—1. Accept him in all his services; 2. He will number him amongst His most favoured children. Apply:—(1) We have an antidote to despondency; (2) A stimulus to exertion in the cause of Christ.

6—8. (6) **sons . . stranger,** *v.* 3. Such had been united with the Jewish Ch. only as proselytes of righteousness. They were to become full members of the spiritual and Messianic Church. (7) **holy mountain, Zion. burnt offerings,** *etc.*, including all kinds of religious services.[a] **house of prayer,** a more spiritual title.[b] (8) **gather others,** *comp.* Jno. x. 16: the Gentiles, in addition to the scattered Jews.

The house of prayer (*v.* 7).—1. Need of revelation of Divine existence. 2. Does He take an interest in the affairs of this world? 3. Is He accessible? 4. Will He pardon? 5. Is He thus accessible and gracious to all? 6. Is there reason to conclude that this result shall be realised? 7. How may this sacred place be made effectually, more effectually, to subserve this great end? 8. Here then we are to come in the spirit of prayer. 9. Here everything is to be done with a view to lead to prayer.

9, 10. (9) **beasts,** *etc.*, symbols of the idolatrous nations, which are called to devour the faithless part of the Jewish nations. (10) **his watchmen,** the negligent rulers and guides

a De. xxiii. 1—8. *b* "Phrase used still in the E. of a person of either sex who has no children."—*Henderson.* *c.* Je. ix. 24. *vv.* 4, 5. *Dr. Chalmers*, v. 472. "People without posterity, of both sexes, are called dry trees; which, strictly speaking, means they are dead, having neither sap, nor leaves, nor fruit."—*Roberts.*

a "Seven centuries had yet to elapse before the Levitical dispensation would terminate, so its language is retained."—*Spk. Com.*

b Mat. xxi. 13.

vv. 6, 7. *Bp. Doane*, 48.

a "Some suppose a particular allusion to the murmuring or growl-

of Israel. **dumb dogs**, can give no warning of danger. **sleeping**, or muttering in their sleep.[a]

Preaching fruit and flowers.—At Hampton Court Palace every one regards with wonder the enormous vine loaded with so vast a multitude of huge clusters: just outside the vine-house is as fine a specimen of the *Wistaria*, and when it is in full bloom the cluster-like masses of bloom cause you to think it a flower-bearing vine, as the other is a fruit-bearing vine. Fit emblems these two famous trees of two ministries, both admired, but not equally to be prized; the ministry of oratory, luxuriant in metaphor and poetry, and the ministry of grace, abounding in sound teaching and soul-saving energy. Gay as are the flower-clusters of the *Wistaria*, no one mistakes them for the luscious bunches of the grape; yet, there are many simpletons in spiritual things who mistake sound for sense, and seem to satisfy their hunger not on solid meat, but on the jingle of a musical dinner-bell.[b]

ing of a dog in its dreams."—*J. A. Alexander.*

Eze. iii. 17, 18.

re. 10, 11. *W. Reading*, iii. 40; *Dr. E. Aplharp*, ii. 185.

"Lovely flowers are the smiles of God's goodness."—*Wilberforce.*

b Spurgeon.

11, 12. (11) **greedy**, lit. *strong of appetite.* **shepherds . . understand**, are unable to comprehend the spiritual wants of the people. **own way**, or selfish interests. **from his quarter**, or better, *one and all of them:* to the uttermost. (12) **fetch wine**, *i.e.* when judgment is actually at hand, they are for revelry.[a]

Influence of evil habits.—The following will serve as a fearful illustration of the melancholy influence which drinking, gambling, and betting have in blunting and destroying the moral feelings:—Two fellows at a tavern having summoned the waiter, the poor man had scarcely entered, when he fell down in a fit of apoplexy. "He's dead!" exclaimed one. "He'll come too!" replied the other. "Dead for five hundred!" "Done!" retorted the second. The noise of the fall, and the confusion which followed, brought up the landlord, who called out to fetch a doctor. "No! no! we must have no interference; there's a bet depending." "But, sir, I shall lose a valuable servant." "Never mind! never mind! you can put him down in the bill."[b]

a "The language here employed strikingly depicts the feelings of the voluptuous in every age."—*Henderson.*

Pr. xxiii. 32—35.

"The reason that many men want their desires is, because their desires want reason. He may do what he will that will do but what he may."—*Warwick.*

b Whitecross.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-SEVENTH.

1, 2. (1) **righteous perisheth**, reference is to early and untimely deaths removing those who were the strength of the nation. **to heart**, as if it were a national loss. **merciful men**, *i.e.* godly men. **none considering**, the purpose of Divine providence in graciously removing the righteous, that they might not share in the calamitous times.[a] (2) **enter into**, the eternal peace, so is spared the earthly calamities.[b] **beds**, dying quietly by ordinary disease. **walking**, *etc.*, fig. of a good straightforward course of life.[c]

The death of the good (*v.* 1).—I. Their death is the perishing of the body. 1. Why then pamper the body? 2. Why centre interests on the wants of the body? II. Their death is generally disregarded by mankind. 1. The thought of death is repugnant to the heart; 2. The concerns of life are all-absorbing. III. Their death is a deliverance from all the evils that are coming on the world. IV. Their death is a step into a higher life. 1. Their bodies sleep; 2. Their souls march on.[d]

The righteous taken from the evil to come.—"The righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are

a "His removal is a sign that the evil is near at hand."—*Spk. Com.*

b Re. xiv. 13.

c "Each one who has walked in the way lying straight before him, instead of turning to the right hand or to the left."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 1. *W. Fenner*, i. 241; *W. Strong*, 200; *Bossuet*, vii. 468; *J. Muscut*, 129; *J. Muir*, 219; *Bp. Van Mildert*, vi. 501; *W. Sewell*, 189; *A. Gatty*, ii. 185.

d Dr. Thomas.

taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come" (Isa. lvii. 1). Methuselah died the year before the flood, Augustine a little before the sacking of Hippo, Pareus just before the taking of Heidelberg, Luther a little before the wars broke out in Germany. But what speak I of single saints? Sometimes the Lord houses great numbers together, before some sweeping judgment comes. How many bright and glorious stars did set almost together, within the compass of a few years, to the astonishment of many wise and tender hearts in England! I find some of them thus ranked in a funeral elegy :—

> The learned Twisse went first (it was his right),
> The holy Palmer, Burroughs, Love, Gouge, White,
> Hill, Whitaker, great Gataker, and Strong,
> Perne, Marshal, Robinson, all gone along.
> I have not named them half; their only strife
> Hath been, of late, who should first part with life.
> Those few who yet survive, sick of this age,
> Long to have done their parts and leave the stage.

The Lord sees it better for them to be under ground than above ground, and therefore, by a merciful providence, sets them out of harm's way.[c]

3—5. (3) sons, *etc.*, *i.e.* "of the idolatrous, soothsaying Jerusalem."[a] Or, those who had mixed themselves up with the sorceries and idolatries of Babylon. (4) against whom, it seemed to be against the Prophet, it really was against Jehovah. sport, in derisive mirth. wide mouth, Ps. xxxv. 21. (5) green tree, reference is to the consecrated groves of the false gods. slaying, *etc.*, the most famous sacrifices of this kind were those in the valley of Hinnom.[b]

Our thoughts.—It is one fault and perversity of our "thoughts," to run into despair, when events come contrary to our wishes and expectations. "Since this evil has come, it is vain to look any more for good;" while His "thoughts" are calmly extending onward to another stage in the progress of events—faithful to the promises then to be fulfilled, and the prophecies then to be accomplished. In the meantime, what a wonderful privilege it is—most wonderful, if we would but reflect—that we are permitted to express our "thoughts" to Him in supplication :—low, and little, and narrow as they are, they may, in this form, through our Divine Mediator, be sent up to Him. While we may not prescribe, or dictate, we may implore, with importunity and continual repetition.[c]

6, 7. (6) smooth stones, these being used as charms.[a] thy lot, or thy luck. receive comfort, better, should I relent for all the influence these can exert? (7) high mountain, in allusion to worship in "high places." thy bed, carrying on the representation of idolatry as adultery.

Stones used as idols.—The stones here referred to were consecrated to the honour of certain deities, and supposed to be instinct with their presence. "I have," says Turner, in his work on Polynesia, "several 'smooth stones of the stream' from the New Hebrides, which were used as idols, and have heard of precisely similar stones being used in other parts of the Pacific. But what do they do with the stones? Very much like what the

"It is long since death began to transport men into another world, and vast shoals or multitudes are gone thither already, yet the trade is going on still; death is carrying off new inhabitants daily, to the 'house appointed for all living.' Who could ever hear the grave say, It is enough? Long has it been getting, but still it asketh." — *Boston.*

c Flavel.

a "The righteous dies, and is at rest; but ye, what will ye make at last of your derision of the righteous, and of the follies and idolatries wherein ye trust? Nothing." — *Mat. Arnold.*

b Je. vii. 31; see also 2 Chr. xxviii. 3, xxxiii. 6.

v. 3. *R. Fidaei*, iii. 253.

c J. Foster.

a "In the earlier times, all the Greeks worshipped, in place of images of the gods, undressed stones." *Pausanias.* "Smooth stones (named salagrams), chiefly from the river Gandaki, are treated as sacred objects by the Vaishnavas all over North India." *Sir. Cm.*

Earl of Roden says the people of Inniskea, off the coast of Mayo, do, or did, with their sacred stone. 'A stone, carefully wrapped up in flannel, is brought out at certain periods to be adored; and when a storm arises this god is supplicated to send a wreck on their coast.' Some of the Polynesian stone gods were supposed to cause pigs to multiply; others were prayed to for the removal of storms: and others were supposed to act as rain-makers and rain-stoppers. There was one of these rain-controlling stones in a district in Samoa. When there was too much rain, those who kept the stone put it to the fire to dry, and cause the rain to stop. If there was great drought, they took the stone to the water and dipped it, thinking that by wetting the stone, rain would be the consequence."

8, 9. (8) **thy remembrance,** either mystic sentences, or figures used as household protectors.[a] (9) **king,** *i.e.* the Assyrian king. **ointment,** *etc.*, presents to propitiate him; but neglecting to seek Jehovah's help. But poss. reference may be to Moloch, as the god-king. **unto hell,** or Hades: fig. for the uttermost shame.

Dying words of Hooker.—"I have lived," says Hooker, "to see that this world is made up of perturbations; and I have long been preparing to leave it, and gathering comfort for the dreadful hour of making my account with God, which I now apprehend to be near. And though I have by His grace loved Him in my youth, and feared Him in my age, and laboured to have a conscience void of offence towards Him, and towards all men, yet if Thou, Lord, shouldst be extreme to mark what I have done amiss, who can abide it? And therefore, where I have failed, Lord, show mercy to me, for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness, through His merits who died to purchase pardon for penitent sinners. And since I owe Thee a death, Lord, let it not be terrible, and then take Thine own time, I submit to it. Let not mine, O Lord, but Thy will be done! God hath heard my daily petitions; for I am at peace with all men; and He is at peace with me."[b]

10—12. (10) **wearied . . way,** in the effort to gain rest and satisfaction by such idolatrous wilfulness. **no hope,**[a] unwilling to believe such idolatry could be quite in vain. **life . . hand,** or Thy hand still able to sustain life. The least respite seems to encourage you in further wickedness. (11) **of whom,** of which of their helpless idols. **held my peace,** in gracious forbearance, which had been interpreted as indifference. (12) **declare,** *i.e.* show it up, prove how empty and hollow it is.

Presuming on God's mercy (v. 10).—The impenitent hope to be saved when they have more reason to fear they will be lost. 1. It is easier to be lost than to be saved; 2. The number of believers is small in comparison with the company to which you belong; 3. You have heard truth enough, if this were all, to save the world; 4. In how many ways and instances have you been warned? 5. You have been wooed by the Spirit; 6. The force of habit is hourly riveting your chains; 7. Your indifference to all this is very suggestive of danger.[b]

He will abundantly pardon.—Never did we take so much pleasure in sinning, as God doth in forgiving. Never did any penitent take so much pleasure in receiving, as God doth in

"There is a stone set up to the south of St. Columbus' Church, in the island of Iriska, about 8ft. high and 2ft. broad. It is called by the natives the *boiling stone*; for when the inhabitants had the first sight of the church, they set up this stone, and then bowed, and said the Lord's Prayer."—*Martin.*

a "Prob. small images like those of the Roman Penates, or household gods, which were in every private family, and were the objects of prayers and offerings."—*Mat. Arnold.*

"'Tis, alas! the poor prerogative of greatness, to be wretched and unpitied."—*Congreve.*

b Dr. Cheever.

a Je. ii. 25.

b American.

"God is merciful!" shouted a few young converts in the ears of a distressed and despairing young man. "Yes," said he, "God is merciful; but He is also just, and His justice will cut me down." In his despair, he came near self-destruction; but God revealed His favour, and he afterwards preached the Gospel with great power.

"Love requires not so much proofs, as expressions, of love. Love demands little else than the power to feel and to require love."—*Richter.*

giving a pardon. He so much delights in it that He counts it His wealth; "riches of grace;" "riches of mercy;" glorious riches of mercy. No attribute else is called His riches. He sighs when He must draw His sword: but when He blots out iniquity, then it is, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out your transgressions for My Name's sake." His delight in this is equal to the delight He hath in His Name. This is pure mercy, to change the tribunal of justice into a "throne of grace;" to bestow pardons, where He might inflict punishments; and to put on the deportment of a father, instead of a judge.[c]

c *Charnock.*

13, 14. (13) **criest**, in the time of thy calamity. **companies**, "multitudinous troops of idols and idolaters." Or, "the things thou hast gathered." **possess the land**, *comp.* ch. lx. 21; Ps. xxxvii. 9. (14) **cast ye up**, *i.e.* make a smooth highway for My returning people.[a]

a Isa. xxxv. 8, xl. 3, 4.

Obstructions to true progress (*v.* 14).—1. The physical world is no obstruction, necessarily, to true progress; 2. Nor is physical labour: 3. Nor are commercial pursuits; 4. Nor are animal appetites. But—1. A non-recognition of God; 2. A wrong recognition of God.—wrong in relation to His character; wrong in religion to His religion.[b]

v. 14. *E. Cooper*, vi. 381.

"Progress — the stride of God!" —*Victor Hugo.*

b *Dr. Thomas.*

15, 16. (15) **Holy**, or *Holy One.* **holy place**, 1 Ti. vi. 16. **contrite . . spirit**, the new test of religion, *see* ch. lxvi. 2. The word *contrite* comes from a verb meaning to *bruise, crush.*[a] (16) **contend**, prolonging even chastisements unduly. **the spirit**, of man, which cannot bear an overweight of even just Divine indignation.

Divine and human greatness (*v.* 15).—I. That in which the greatness of God consists,—as to time,—as to space,—as to holiness—unchangeable. II. The greatness of man. 1. The nature of that greatness,—the humble with whom God dwells,—God dwelling in, and with man; 2. The persons who are great.—the humble, the contrite.[b]—*The greatness and condescension of God* (*v.* 15).—I. The greatness of God. 1. His superiority to all others in the scale of being; 2. His eternity; 3. His holiness; 4. His self-manifestation. II. The condescension of God. 1. Its objects; 2. Its expression; 3. Its purpose. Apply:—(1) Are we contrite and humble? (2) Let not God's greatness prevent our coming to Him.[c]

a "The most sublime description of the Divine majesty and condescension to be found in the Scrip. The words require no comment, but they have a depth of meaning wh. no finite mind can fully comprehend."—*Henderson.*

"Isaiah encouraged those who were trodden down to perseverance, by reminding them that real dignity is something very different from present success."—*F. W. Robertson.*

v. 15. *J. Gregorie*, i. 136; *W. Reading*, iv. 413; *J. Penn*, i. 41; *Dr. W. Leechman*, ii. 329; *F. F. Clarke*, 121; *M. Lloyd*, 98; *Bp. Bloomfield*, 186.

b *F. W. Robertson.*

c *G. Brooks.*

Jerusalem.—

Jerusalem, Jerusalem! enthroned once on high,
Thou favoured home of God on earth, thou heaven below the sky!
Now brought to bondage with thy sons, a curse and grief to see,
Jerusalem, Jerusalem! our tears shall flow for thee.

Oh! hadst thou known thy day of grace, and flocked beneath the wing
Of Him who called thee lovingly, thine own anointed King;
Then had the tribes of all the world gone up thy pomp to see,
And glory dwelt within thy gates, and all thy sons been free.

"And who art thou that mournest me?" replied the ruin grey,
"And fear'st not rather that thyself may prove a castaway?
I am a dried and abject branch, my place is given to thee;
But woe to every barren graft of thy wild olive tree!

"Greatness, thou gaudy torment

"Our day of grace is sunk in night, our time of mercy spent,
For heavy was my children's crime, and strange their punishment;
Yet gaze not idly on our fall, but, sinner, warned be,
Who spared not His chosen seed may send His wrath on thee!

"Our day of grace is sunk in night, thy noon is in its prime;
Oh turn and seek thy Saviour's face in this accepted time!
So, Gentile, may Jerusalem a lesson prove to thee,
And in the new Jerusalem thy home for ever be!"[d]

of our souls; the wise man's fetter, and the rage of fools."—*Otway.*

d Heber.

17, 18. (17) **covetousness,**[a] ch. lvi. 11. **hid me,** hiding of face was a token of displeasure. **frowardly,** turning away, or backsliding. **heart,** or wilful heart. (18) **ways,** *i.e.* wilful ways. **heal him,** with restoring mercies. **restore comforts,** make consolations abound over his troubles. **mourners,** spiritual ones, Mat. v. 4.

Divine mercy and anger contrasted (*v.* 17).—1. A dispensation of health to those spiritually diseased; 2. A proclamation of peace to those who are far off and to those who are near; 3. A declaration of ruin to the impenitent.[b]

a "The terms indicate a rapacious person, one who breaks thro' all bounds in order to acquire gain."—*Henderson.*

v. 17. *Dr. J. Jamieson,* i. 410.

b R. Cecil, M.A.

19, 20. (19) **fruit of lips,** which is thankful praise. God makes it by giving His gracious healing and restoring mercies. **far off . . near,** Eph. ii. 17. (20) **cannot rest,** better, for it cannot rest. "The Heb. expresses that it can never be at rest."[a] **mire,** *etc.*, "Its waters work up mire and filth."[b]

The choicest fruit (*v.* 19).—I. The excellency of the object—"peace." II. The universality of the subject—"to him that is," etc. III. The causality of the agent—"I create." IV. The facility of the accomplishment—"the fruit of the lips."[c]—*The fruit of the lips* (*v.* 19).—I. The nature of the blessing which is proclaimed in the Gospel. 1. There is war between God and man; 2. There is war between the higher and the lower principles of human nature. II. The persons to whom this blessing of peace is offered—1. In respect of religious privileges; 2. Of social advantages; 3. Of moral character; 4. Local distance. III. The influence of this blessing upon its recipient. 1. Beneficial in its operation; 2. Individual in its efficiency; 3. Divine in its agency. IV. Its practical issue. 1. The fruit of the lips is thanksgiving; 2. God creates the occasion and the disposition.[d]

a Fausset.

b Lowth.

"When the intemperate heats of the spirit break out in scurrilous and abusive language, then the troubled sea casts forth mire and dirt."—*Mat. Henry.*

v. 19. *J. Jowett,* 274.

c N. Hardy.

The Greenland musicians.—In one of the missionary settlements of the United Brethren, in Greenland, there was a little band of performers on different musical instruments. Their services had been peculiarly acceptable during public worship at Easter. After the Easter holidays, a few years ago, the missionary was sitting at his desk, when the Greenland brother who had played the bass-viol entered his room, and sat down. As he said nothing, the missionary proceeded with his work, till, having finished the page, he inquired whether his visitor had anything to communicate. The answer was, "No, nothing particular; but don't you think I played the bass-viol very well this season?" The missionary replied, "I think you did, and I hope you are thankful that the Lord has given you that talent." "Oh yes," was the answer, "but do I not deserve a piece of a roll of tobacco for it?" "What!" said brother Konigseer, "I am ashamed of you! Would you have pay for being so highly favoured by our Saviour that you are enabled in a little way to serve His people? Go, and repent of your ingratitude." By some means, the other

d G. Brooks.

"If an exhausted and needy traveller should rest at the foot of a castle, and some one from the walls above should reach him a supply for all his needs, could he keep from looking up to see who had relieved him? So it is not possible for the true Christian, who lives daily out of the almsbasket of God's providence, not to look with thankfulness to that Father who liberally supplies

all his need."—*Spencer.*

e R. T. S.

musicians heard of the demand made by the bass-viol player. They immediately expostulated with him on the sinfulness of such conduct, and excluded him from their little band. He was struck with sorrow, and came and confessed to the missionary, with many tears, the base disposition by which he had been tempted: but it was some time before his musical brethren would again permit him to join them.[e]

a Mat. Arnold.

21. **no peace**, ch. xlviii. 22. "Again this warning as to the sole condition upon which God's salvation can be had."[a]

No peace to the wicked (*v.* 21).—I. Who are the wicked? 1. Not only the openly ungodly, but those who have misconceptions of the nature of duty and of the character of God; 2. Those who reject Christ; 3. Those who reject the Spirit of God; 4. Those who live after the dictates of their own evil will. II. How it is that there is no peace to wicked men. 1. He loves that which must destroy his peace; 2. He is every moment under the wrath of his Maker; 3. He is especially without peace when he needs it most, as in the day of affliction, etc. Apply:—(1) Seek peace with God; (2) Now; (3) In the spirit of prayer; (4) Let those who have this peace rejoice in it, and make it known.[b]

Fear of death.—William the Conqueror, extremely alarmed on his death-bed, entreated the clergy to intercede for him. "Laden with many and grievous sins," he exclaimed. "I tremble; and being ready to be taken soon into the terrible examination of God, I am ignorant what I should do. I have been brought up in feats of arms from my childhood; I am greatly polluted with effusion of much blood; I can by no means number the evils I have done these sixty-four years, for which I am now constrained, without stay, to render an account to the just Judge."

r. 21. Dr. J. Boys, 167; T. Horton, 275; Bp. Stillingfleet, i. 387; Y. Brady, i. 329; J. Foord, 199; Bp. Lowth, 319; Dr. J. Laughorne, ii. 121; J. Logan, 329; B. Hinton, 108; T. T. Haverfield, i. 218; G. W. Woodhouse, ii. 1; R. W. Evans, i. 73. b Hon. B. W. Noel. Mr. Cecil followed one of the pious members of his congregation to the grave. The people saw her lowered into her long home, and said, "How sad!" Mr. Cecil looked in, and said, "How well!"

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-EIGHTH.

1, 2. (1) **aloud**, lit. *with the throat.* This call is made to the Prophet.[a] **spare not**, ch. liv. 2. **trumpet**, Ho. viii. 1. **sins**, esp. of hypocrisy. (2) **seek me**, reference is to the outward religious zeal shown, wh. God knew was not really the expression of inward feeling.[b] **ask . . justice**, "as if they were injured persons, whose rights God did not defend."[c] **approaching to God**, while their hearts were far from Him.

a Isa. xl. 6. This expression is still in use in the north of England. The invitation to partake freely of food provided is couched in these terms, "*Don't spare.*"

b "Here is a warning to all, that there may be much outward show of religion, in daily approaches to God in His house, while there is no vital piety."—*Wordsworth.*

c Syk. Cm. d Dr. Thomas. e G. Brooks.

Selfish piety (*vv.* 1—5).—I. It is very earnest—1. In study; 2. In prayer; 3. In self-sacrifices; 4. In its churchism; 5. In its professions. II. It is terribly reprehensible. 1. It is an insult to God; 2. It is pernicious to souls. III. It is sanctimoniously solemn.[d]—*Formalism* (*v.* 2).—I. Explain it. A form of religion includes—1. Some degree of religious knowledge: 2. Attendance on public ordinances; 3. Membership in the Christian Church; 4. Respectable moral character. II. Expose its deficiencies. 1. It does not satisfy the great wants of human nature; 2. It does not yield the pleasure found in spiritual religion: 3. It tends to foster intolerance; 4. It is diametrically opposed to the spirit and precepts of the Gospel.[e]

3—5. (3) **fasted**, the religious act which seemed so suitable to their captive and humbled condition.[a] The only fast-day appointed by the Mosaic law was the Day of Atonement.[b] **thou**

a "Besides the regular fasts of the Jewish religion, there were,

seest not, *comp.* Mal. iii. 14. afflicted, *etc.*, by the fasting. find pleasure, not duty, nor piety, but mere self-pleasing. Really you enjoy your fastings. exact . . labours, make your dependents work while you fast, and are as rough and exacting as ever with them. (4) smite, *etc.*, indicating harsh, violent treatment of dependents. voice . . high, in altercation; or perhaps in loud public prayer.[c] (5) bow . . sackcloth, outward signs of humiliation.

Philanthropic piety (*v.* 5).—I. Its ritual is philanthropic service. II. Its influence is gloriously beneficent. III. Its spirit is acceptable to God.[d]

Philanthropic piety.—

It bids us seek the holes where famine lurks,
Clutching the hoarded crust with trembling fingers,
Where toil in damp, unwholesome caverns works,
Or, with strained eyeball, o'er the needle lingers.

It bids us stand beside the dying bed
Of those about to quit the world for ever,
Smooth the toss'd pillow, prop the aching head,
Cheer the heart-broken, whom death hastes to sever.

And those who copy thus Christ's life on earth,
Feeding the poor and comforting the weeper,
Will all receive a meed of priceless worth,
When ripely gathered by the heavenly Reaper.

6, 7. (6) loose, *etc.*, *i.e.* "dissolve every tie wherewith one has unjustly bound his fellow men."[a] heavy burdens, Heb. *bundles of the yoke.* oppressed, *lit.* broken either with servitude or poverty. (7) deal thy bread, fig. for charity and hospitality, wh. in the East are regarded as cardinal virtues.[b] own flesh, immediate kinsmen:[c] virtue had so failed that men neglected even the poor of their own families.

Divine remonstrance (*v.* 6).—There are three ways in which the Church exhibits the form of godliness without its power. 1. By a want of spirituality and practical reality in the observance of religious ordinances; 2. By the existence of those who differ from those in error; 3. By imperfect and wrong notions with respect to the obligations of the Sabbath day.[d]

Care for the orphan.—The following true narrative will, it is believed, exemplify the words of the text concerning the fast which God has chosen; and, were all the circumstances connected with it more fully known, it would doubtless be far more interesting.—*The adopted children.*—A sergeant and his wife in a foreign land, having no children of their own, provided a home for at least four destitute and afflicted ones. A soldier died in the regiment to which the sergeant belonged, and his wife soon followed. They left a helpless babe, but the sergeant's wife brought it to her house, and they adopted it for their own. A short time passed away, and a poor little native child was left uncared for. It found a home, however, with this kind-hearted Christian man and his excellent wife. Two other children, in like circumstances, were afterwards added to the orphan family. The regiment was ordered to march some hundred miles. "What will you do now with your adopted family?" asked a lady of the sergeant's wife. "You will have to leave them behind." "Leave my children!" said this noble-hearted woman. "No, during the captivity in Babylon, special fasts appointed as days of repentance and prayer for Israel."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b Lc. xvi. 29, 31.

c Matt. vi. 16—18.

d Dr. Thomas.

v. 3. *Bp. Smalridge*, 12 *Sers.*; *W. Reading*, iii. 53; *Dr. Fothergill*, i. 97.

vv. 3, 4. *W. Berriman*, ii. 160.

v. 4. *W. Fenner*, i. 407.

v. 5. *H. Marriott*, iii. 17.

a Fausset.
"In these vv. the Prophet says nothing of bodily mortification. He only names the works of righteousness towards the oppressed, and beneficence towards the poor and needy."—*Nägelsbach.*
b Comp. Mat. xxv. 35, 36.
"Hospitality is a virtue wh. has always held the very first rank among the Oriental nations; and any symptom of indisposition to exercise it has ever met with excoriation."—*Henderson.*
c Ge. xxix. 14, xxxvii. 27; 2 Sa. v. 1.
d R. D. Davies, B.A.
v. 6. *J. Vincent*, i. 247.
vv. 6, 7. *G. Benson*, 385; *G. Austin*, 393; *Dr. A. Grant*, i. 197; *Dr. R. Graves*, iv. 152; *W. A. Butler*, ii. 148.

never! they shall all go with us; we could not part with one of them."[e]

8. **light**, the emblem of prosperity. **health**, lit. *a long bandage.*[a] This is an instance of mixed metaphor: light and healing being blended in the Prophet's thought. **go before thee**, further fig. of a people marching, in reference to the return to Jerusalem. **rereward**, like a rearguard on the march.

Velocity of light.—It is scarcely possible so to strain the imagination as to conceive the velocity with which light travels. "What mere assertion will make any man believe," asks Sir John Herschel, "that in one second of time, in one beat of the pendulum of a clock, a ray of light travels over 192,000 miles; and would therefore perform the tour of the world in about the same time that it requires to wink with our eyelids, and in much less time than a swift runner occupies in taking a single stride?" Were a cannon-ball shot directly towards the sun, and were it to maintain its full speed, it would be 20 years in reaching it; and yet light travels through this space in seven or eight minutes. The result given in the *Annuaire* for 1862 for the velocity of light in a second is 77,000 leagues, which corresponds to 215,834 miles; while that obtained at the Pulkowa Observatory is 189,746 miles. William Richardson gives as the result of the pas age of light from the sun to the earth 8′ 19″·28, from which we obtain a velocity of 215,392 miles in a second.[b]

9, 10. (9) **then**, when you have returned to righteousness. **the yoke**, the sign of their oppression. **putting . . finger**, "the finger of scorn pointed at simple-minded godly men." sign of contempt.[a] **vanity**, or boasting.[b] (10) **soul . . hungry**, *comp. v.* 7.[c] **light . . obscurity**, fig. for prosperity suddenly succeeding calamity.

Benevolence (an old gentleman).—When the money to build Bethlehem Hospital was being collected, those who were employed to solicit donations went to a small house, the door of which being half opened, they overheard the master, an old man, scolding his female servant for having thrown away a match without using both ends. After diverting themselves some time with the dispute, they presented themselves before the old gentleman, and stated the object of their visit: though, from what had just passed, they entertained very little hope of success. The supposed miser, however, no sooner understood their business than he stepped into a closet, from whence he brought a bag, and counted out four hundred guineas, which he presented to them. No astonishment could exceed that of the collectors at this unexpected occurrence; they expressed their surprise, and told the old gentleman that they had overheard his quarrel with his servant. "Gentlemen," said he, "your surprise is occasioned by a thing of very little consequence. I keep house and save money in my own way: the first furnishes me with the means of doing the other. With regard to benevolent donations, you may always expect most from prudent people who keep their own accounts." When he had thus addressed them, he requested them to withdraw without the smallest ceremony, to prevent which he shut the door, not thinking, probably, so much of the four hundred guineas which he had just given away as of the match which had been carelessly thrown into the fire.[d]

Bibl. Treas.

e "Applied by surgeons to heal a wound. Hence *restoration* from all past calamities."—*Fausset.* Ps. xcvii. 11, cxii. 4; Pr. iv. 18; Mal. iv. 2.

ver. 7, 8. *Dr. S. Johnson*, i.

b Mem. of Astron. Soc.

"As the earth, either in its barrenness or fruitfulness, in its beauties or deformities, can only be seen by the light of the sun; so man can only discover his true moral character before God by the light which shines upon him from the Sun of righteousness."—*J. Bate.*

a "The pointing of the finger is a gesture of derision."—*J. A. Alexander.*

"Indicative of mockery and insolence towards the pious and persisting part of the nation."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b "Falsehood."—*Michaelis.*

"Secret and malignant machination."—*Paulus.*

"Fault-finding."—*Vitringa.*

"Strife and bickerings."—*Gesenius.*

c "Draw it out of its narrow self-love, that it may go along with the dole wh. passes from thy hand."—*Sp. Com.*

d R. T. S.

11, 12. (11) guide thee, in the return to Palestine. drought, or parched places on the journey. make fat, or strengthen thee. watered garden, the Oriental conception of the beautiful and the happy.[a] (12) build .. places, at Jerusalem, and elsewhere in the Holy Land. foundations, *etc., i.e.* wh. for generations had lain bare and exposed. paths to dwell in, or paths to habitable regions.[b]

Under repairs (*v.* 12).—I. Damage has been done—1. To the Divine image in man; 2. To the relationships of man. II. Damaged man is under repairs. 1. The method is his; 2. The materials are his; 3. The ministries are his; 4. The memorial is his. III. These repairs must be done in time. 1. How much time has been absolutely wasted! 2. How little really improved! 3. The remaining portion is little enough for the work.[c]

Roads and railways for Syria and Palestine.—A territory to which the advantage of commerce is denied by the absence of roads for the facilities of ingress and egress is shut out from the civilising influence of commercial intercourse, and offers a formidable obstruction to the enterprise of visitors either for pleasure or mercantile objects. No commerce can be carried on with the least success where the easy conveyance of merchandise does not exist. The cost and difficulty of transport is enough of itself to restrain the efforts of those who might earnestly desire to embark in the business of trade; for what encouragement could there be to one to cultivate his own resources when such obstacles lay in the way of his conveying his own products to another, and carry home that which he may procure in exchange? We shall go no further than Palestine—that country which once flowed with milk and honey, and would again flow with all the abundance which it formerly enjoyed; but, bowed down by an ignorant and semi-civilised race, the spirit of the inhabitants is suppressed, the difficulty of carrying on the inconsiderable trade which now exists effectually checks all enterprise or attempt to extend the available commerce. Travellers even must be rather resolute to attempt the exploration of the country, the means of doing so being actually hazardous from the rugged and narrow pathways and defiles they have to encounter. A railway has been projected from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and surely a more desirable undertaking could not be entered into for facilitating intercourse with a country hallowed by the once gracious favour of the Almighty, and the scene of our Saviour's earthly abode, His heavenly teachings to mankind, His final sufferings and death. The pilgrims to the country alone deserve regard, and their numbers, great as they now are, would, by advantage of roads or railways, greatly increase; and the fact is well known that wherever a railroad has been formed, traffic most surely increases, and is, in fact, created. Let us consider also the salubrious climate and fertility of Syria, which are so surpassingly great that it has been appropriately called a terrestrial paradise; yet strange is it that emigrants overlook the advantages of settlement in a land fitted for immediate cultivation, but betake themselves to countries of variable and uncomfortable climate, where the aboriginal forests must be cleared ere the smallest return can be had from the ungrateful soil![d]

13, 14. (13) sabbath, *see* ch. lvi. 2.[a] a delight, source of real joy.[b] thine own words, better, mere words; "going

[a] "When you go in at the gate of an Eastern house, you find a paved court, a piazza, and doors or windows opening upon it, or upon the garden in the rear. The ornament most prized in a garden is the marble tank. These tanks are often very tastefully cut and ornamented. It is the height of Oriental luxury to spread a carpet on the grass, sit cross-legged upon it, and draw the narguile, or sip a cup of coffee."—*Van Lennep.*

b Maurer.

c H. T. Miller, A Sea Sermon.

v. 12. *Bp. Broughton*, 183; *Dr. Wordsworth*, i; v. 1.

The ancient city of Troy had but one gate. Go round and round the city, you would have found no other. If you wanted to get in, there was but one way. So to the golden city of heaven there is but one gate, Christ says, "I am the door."

d London Mirror.

"He travels safe, and not unpleasantly, who is guarded by poverty and guided by love."—*Sir P. Sidney.*

[a] Comp. Je. xvii. 12—27; Eze. xxii. 8, 26.

through a formal, heartless routine of lip service." (14) ride . . earth, De. xxxvii. 13; descriptive of conquest and triumphant possession.[c]

The Sabbath (*v.* 13).—I. In what light we should view the Sabbath. 1. Holy; 2. Honourable; 3. Delightful. II. In what manner we should employ it. 1. What is forbidden; 2. What is commanded. III. The benefits we may expect from a due observance of it. 1. Delight in God; 2. Victory over our spiritual enemies; 3. The full possession of the heavenly Canaan. Apply:—(1) How reasonable are the requirements of God in His Gospel; 2. How just will be the condemnation of those who disobey them.[d]

Making briefs on Sunday.—The distinguished Dr. Wilson, pastor of the first Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, for a number of years before he became a preacher of the Gospel, was an eminent lawyer in the state of Delaware. He was accustomed, when pressed with business, to make out his briefs and prepare for his Monday's pleading on the Sabbath. But he so uniformly failed during the week in carrying out his Sunday plans, that it arrested his attention. As a philosopher, he inquired into the cause of his uniform failure, and came to the conclusion that it might be, and probably was, on account of his violation of the Sabbath, by employing it in secular business. He therefore, from time to time, abandoned the practice of doing anything for his clients on that day. The difficulty ceased. His efforts on Monday were as successful as on other days. Such were the facts in his case, and many others have testified to similar facts in their experience.[e]

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-NINTH.

1, 2. (1) not shortened, the answer to the question why deliverance was so long delayed.[a] ear heavy,[b] dulled with deafness. (2) your iniquities, *etc.*, "instead therefore of finding fault with God, they should criminate themselves."[c] hid his face, made Him to hide His face.

God's hand not shortened (*v.* 1).—I. Can Christ save in every part of our fallen world? II. Can the arm of the Lord save the most polluted and despicable of the human race? III. Can the Divine hand save the masses of the fallen? IV. Can the hand of God save men for ever? V. Can the hand of God save to the highest degree of purity and glory? Apply—1. It is of the Lord's salvation which the text speaks; 2. It is His actual salvation; 3. His ear is open, and must be addressed by prayer: 4. God's omnific hand faith must grasp; 5. The Divine, inexhaustible ability of Christ should engage our grateful attention.[d]—*A state of sin is a state of schism* (*v.* 2).—1. Between God and man; 2. Angels and man; 3. Nature and man; 4. Man and man; 5. Between the higher and lower principles of man.[e]

3, 4. (3) hands . . blood,[a] Is. i. 15. Reference is to the putting to death of the innocent, or to the violence with wh. crime was attended.[b] (4) calleth, *i.e.* none brings a just suit into court.[c] for truth, or with truth, *i.e.* truthfully.

Affairs in Burmah—Human sacrifices.—The *Globe* says:—A private telegram of yesterday's date received in Liverpool states:

b "The observance of the Sabbath has, in all ages, been found essential to the maintenance and prosperity of spiritual religion."—*Henderson.*

c "In early times and in the warfare of early times the high and rocky situations were also the strong and defensible situations, and therefore he who occupied them was formidable and powerful."—*Mat. Arnold.*

d G. Brooks.

e Dr. Cheever.

"A corruption of morals usually follows a profanation of the Sabbath."—*Blackstone.*

a "The Prophet merely pauses, as it were, for a moment, to exonerate his Master from all blame, before continuing his accusation of the people."—*J. A. Alexander.*
b Isa. vi. 10.
c "They stood in their own light, and put a bar in their own door."—*Mat. Henry.*
d Dr. Burns.
e Dr. M'Cosh.

a "This, and what follows, is a picture of the sins of the unfaithful part of the Jewish nation during the captivity in Babylon, and in spite of the lessons taught by

"King of Burmah dead. No cause for anxiety." A report of the death of the king was received a few days ago, but was afterwards contradicted. The following, telegraphs the *Daily News*' correspondent at Rangoon, is an explanation of the massacres at Mandalay:—When the city was built, he says, human sacrifices were offered up. A new monarch usually has a new capital, and the evil spirits are irritated that there has lately been no change of capital, the virtue of the old sacrifices being gone. They have, therefore, plagued the city with small-pox, and to appease them the astrologers declared it necessary to offer up 700 lives—men, women, boys, girls, *pounhas*, priests, and foreigners. A hundred each of all ranks were consequently buried alive under the towers of the city walls. An attack was made on the Roman Catholic convent unsuccessfully, and a frightful panic prevails at Mandalay, whence the people are leaving by hundreds. It is denied that the king's illness is small-pox, and it is said to be leprosy. The sacrifices were made by his order. The Rajah of Munipur is preparing reprisals for the late Burmese raid. The *Times*' correspondent writes:—Theebau's son and heir, an infant a few months old, has died from small-pox. The late king's brother, Paghan Meng, has also died. He was formerly king, but was dethroned in 1853, and has been a State prisoner since then. In consequence of these misfortunes, the court astrologers have advised Theebau to remove his capital to Mount Shobo, the original seat of the present dynasty.[d]

5, 6. (5) **cockatrice' eggs,**[a] *see* ch. xi. 8. The basilisk, *cerastes*. The figures here used are forcibly suggestive of the fruitlessness of all ungodly plans. **spider's web,**[b] thin, unsubstantial schemes. "They spin vain, foolish schemes, which can only come to nought." **eat . . eggs,** fig. for adopting their principles. **crushed,** *etc.*, or, "if one is crushed there creeps out a viper."[c] (6) **not . . garments,** shall not serve to cover them. Things like "spiders' webs" are useless for garments.

Sin universal.—The existence of sin; of sin as an acknowledged fact; of sin as an acknowledged evil, which has not only tainted the nature, but which has poured its corruption upon every part of every man; found everywhere,—alike in the crowded city streets, and among the scantier tribes of the savanna; alike where refinement and civilisation gild and soften crime, and where, in the swarthy-bearded Druse, it reigns tameless as the pennon that flutters upon the lance of his djerrid; alike in sordid man and lost woman, in generous youth and smiling babe, in all circumstances, in all countries, in all parallels of latitude, in all diversities of language,—there is no escape, and there is no exception from this disastrous uniformity of evil. The fountain has been corrupted, and the streams of necessity must flow polluted and impure. Every mouth must be stopped, for all the world is guilty before God.[d]

7, 8. (7) **feet,** *etc.*, Pr. i. 16; Ro. iii. 15. **destruction, ruin, breaking. their paths,** the ways they wilfully mark out for themselves. (8) **way of peace,**[a] which is ever identical with the way of righteousness. **goings,** or *tracks*. **crooked paths,** as opposed to the straight road of righteousness.

No peace in the way of sin (*v.* 8).—I. The characters described, those who make crooked paths. 1. From the line of duty pre-

that captivity."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b Pr. i. 11, 12.

c Gesenius.

"As they say of true holiness and Christianity, *Christi sarcina penata habet*—Christ's burden which is nothing else but true godliness, is a winged thing, and bravely bears itself upwards upon its own wings, soaring aloft towards God; so we may say of all impiety, *diaboli sarcina pondus habet*—the devilish nature is always within the central attractions of hell, and its own weight instigates and accelerates its motion thither."—*John Smith.*

d Newspaper.

a "Cockatrice is compounded of the words *cock* and *adder*, and is a fabled venomous serpent bred from an egg. Serpents do not lay eggs, but bring forth their young alive."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b Job viii. 14.

c Luther; Gesenius.

"Opposition seems only to produce evil of a worse type."—*Spk. Com.*

d Dr. Punshon.

a "Either in relation to God, to their own conscience, or to their fellow men."—*Fausset.*

Isa. lvii. 21; Ro iii. 17, 18.

scribed by the law; 2. Prescribed by the Gospel: 3. By conscience. II. The awful condition of their souls. Cannot know peace—1. In life; 2. In death; 3. In the eternal world. Apply:—(1) The erring; (2) Those who are walking in the right way.[b]

b C. Simeon, M.A.

9, 10. (9) **judgment**,[a] here, God's vindication and gracious deliverance. **from us**, all suffer, on account of these wilful transgressors, and these hypocrites. Here Isaiah takes the place of the intercessor. **justice**, or righteousness, God's faithful keeping of His promises. **light**, some sign of the coming redemption-day: but the night still lingers. (10) **grope**, Do. xxviii. 29: comparing the nation to helpless blind men. **desolate . . dead**, we are as if shut up in sepulchres, like the dead.

Intellectual light.—

Marvels have long been in vogue amongst sages,
Yet, though in many things harsh, if not rancorous
All the philosophers, scribes of all ages,
Combine, "*una voce*," in one point to anchor us—
Children of light!—leave the world to its mulishness,
Things to their nature and fools to their foolishness,
Granite was hard in the quarries of yore!

Hoary old Merlin, that sage necromancer,
Gave me, a student, a similar answer,
When I besought him for light and for lore:—
Student of light! leave the world to its mulishness,
Things to their nature and fools to their foolishness,
Berries were bitter in forests of yore!

Treading the snow-crested heights of Armenia,
Treading the valleys of broad Abyssinia,
The oracle answered me just as before:—
Wouldst thou have peace? Leave the world to its mulishness,
Things to their nature and fools to their foolishness,
Beetles were blind in the ages of yore![b]

a "Divine judgments interposed to vindicate the cause of the nation." — *Henderson.*

v. 9. Dr. R. Shepherd, Bamp. Lec. 115.

"Ah! noblest minds sink soonest into ruin; like a tree that with the weight of its own golden fruitage is bent down to the dust."—*H. Neele.*

"As the mind must govern the hands, so in every society the man of intelligence must direct the man of labour." — *Johnson.*

b Goethe.

11—13. (11) **roar**, as expression of impatience.[a] **growl**, as with a bear's deep voice. **mourn**, *etc.*, the dove is noted for its plaintive note.[b] "The language of dissatisfaction, grief, and despair." (12) **multiplied**, indicating a penitent feeling of the greatness of the national sin in God's sight.[c] **with us**, *i.e.* we deeply feel them. (13) **transgressing**, *etc.*, the forms of sin against God, and men, are here detailed.

Folly of impatience.—A merchant was riding home with a knapsack full of money behind him: it rained heavily, and he was wet through and through. He complained bitterly that God gave him such bad weather for his journey. His way led him through a thick wood. Here, with horror, he saw a robber, who pointed a gun at him, and pulled the trigger. He would have been killed without a chance of escape; but, owing to the rain, the powder had become damp, and the gun did not go off. The merchant put spurs to his horse, and escaped the danger. Then he reflected on his folly in grumbling at the very providence which saved his life.—*Impatience reproved.*—At Lalcham, Dr. Arnold once got out of patience, and spoke sharply to a dull pupil; when the boy looked up in his face, and said, "Why do you speak angrily, sir? Indeed, I am doing the best I can."

a "We complain loudly and obstreperously, and we complain with whining and moaning; in vain, because our heart is not right with God."—*Matt. Arnold.*

"The Latin poets also speak of the voice of bears as *genitus*, or groaning."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Isa. xxxviii. 14; Ezc. vii. 16.

c "To aggravate the guilt of sin, it is frequently spoken of in the Scriptures as being committed *in the*

Years after, he used to tell the story to his children, and said, "I never felt so ashamed of myself in my life. That look and that speech I have never forgotten."

14, 15. (14) judgment . . backward, repelled from law court, and society. Better read, *is thrust back.* fallen . . street,[a] open place, such as was usually found near the city gate, or place of judgment. (15) faileth, or *was missed;* was *found wanting.* a prey, or would surely be plundered.[b] no judgment, *i.e.* no just judgment; no prevailing principles of righteousness.

The righteous a prey to the wicked (*v.* 15).—It is my intention—I. To establish this fact. 1. This will be found to be true in former ages; 2. Nor is it less true at the present hour. I come now to—II. Account for it. The righteous—1. Irritates and incenses Satan; 2. He reproves and condemns the world. Address—(1) Those who through the fear of man are induced to continue in evil; (2) Those who are called to suffer for righteousness' sake.[c]

Sriftness of justice.—What a separation it will be! Once the whole congregation of Israel were called to stand before God. There was a secret sinner among them, and the separating time was come, and he must be taken out to be punished. He stood there among the rest, and nobody could think who it could be. Presently every tribe was called to stand the scrutiny, and one tribe was fixed upon, and then the families of that tribe; and one family was taken, and at last the very man was pointed out, and he was taken. Some years ago there was a man who did a wicked deed. His name was Tawell. He committed murder; but no one, as he thought, knew anything about it. After he had committed the crime he went to the railway station, and took a ticket to come up to London. He jumped into one of the carriages, the train started, and now he thought himself safe. After he had left the place the dreadful deed was discovered, and some suspicion falling upon this man, a message was sent to the railway station, but he was gone. However, there was a little wire running along by the side of the railway, and that carried a message up to town. It gave a description of the murderer, his hat, his brown coat, his age, the colour of his hair, his height, and such other particulars as could be furnished. After a little while the train arrived at Paddington. The carriages are full of people; the innocent and the guilty are there; they have all arrived at the platform together. The tickets are taken, the doors are opened, the people step out, and are hurrying away to their homes. But there are some fierce-looking men watching every carriage—scrutinising every passenger. See! they keep their eyes on that one man; they follow him: and at last they lay their hands on his shoulder. He is separated from all the rest: what an awful separation! They say, "You must go with us. You are our prisoner." He is to be gathered to a different home. They bind his hands with handcuffs, they lodge him in prison. He is tried, found guilty, and suffers death.[d]

16, 17. (16) no man, worthy to take up the case, and deliver His people. intercessor, pleading with Him in the people's behalf.[a] his arm, ch. lxiii. 5. In the return from the captivity God's power, not any man's plan, is exalted. righteousness,

presence of, or *before* God."—*Henderson.*

a "Or, in the forum, the place of judicature, usually at the gate of a city."—*Fausset.*

b "He as good as surrenders himself to be plundered by all."—*Spk. Com.*

Ps. xii. 1.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 15. *E. Erskine,* ii. 66; *J. Scott,* 205; *A. Grant, Bamp. Lec.* 262.

"The Bible is like Aaron's breastplate, in that it is decked with jewels and enriched with fair embroidery of gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet; but what ennobles it far above the flaming gems and cunning workmanship is the insertion, in the midst, of God's own oracle—the Urim and Thummim—wherein the Holy One vouchsafes to reveal Himself to mortals, in answer to the question, 'What must I do to be saved?'"—*Stoughton.*

"For sin, like unto a stone that is cast into the water, multiplies itself by infinite circles."—*Basil.*

d Gover.

a Such as Aaron, Nu. xviii. 1, 2; or Phinehas, Nu. xxv. 7.

"In his usual anthropopathic style Isaiah re-

presents God as filled with amazement at the discovery that no one should be found qualified to reform and save the nation."—*Henderson.*

b Eph. vi. 10—17; 1 Th. v. 8. "God equipped Himself for battle, and arrayed His power, justice, and distinguishing attachment to His people, against their persecutors and oppressors."—*J. A. Alexander.*

c Gurnall.

a Maurer. "When the oppressors shall come in like an overflowing of the river Euphrates, they shall be broken by the word of the Lord."—*Targum.*

b Dr. Parker.

vv. 19, 20. *S. Bishop,* 54.

a "Does the Spirit of God remain, then also does His Word; does the Word remain, then preachers also remain; do preachers remain, then also hearers do; do hearers remain, then also remain believers; and therefore the Christian Church remains also."—*Cramer.*

He. viii. 10, x. 16.

b A. W. Brown.

v. 20. *H. Binning,* iii. 85; *Bp. Heber,* i. 171.

v. 21. *C. P. Eden,* 276.

faithful keeping of His promise, for His own name's sake. (17) breastplate, fig. here representing God as coming forth, like a warrior, to take up the cause of His people.[b] vengeance, for the oppressors. zeal, or jealousy of the Divine honour, wh. cannot endure evil.

Armour.—The helmet is of continual use. We shall need it as long as our war with sin and Satan lasts. The Christian is not beneath hope, so long as above ground; nor above hope, so long as he is beneath heaven. Indeed, when once he enters the gates of that glorious city, then farewell hope, and welcome love, for ever. He may say with the holy martyr: "Armour becomes earth, but robes heaven." Hope goes into the field, and waits on the Christian till the last battle be fought, and the field cleared; and then faith and hope together carry him in the chariot of the promise to heaven's door, where they deliver up his soul into the hands of love and joy, which stand ready to conduct him into the blissful presence of God.[c]

18, 19. (18) deeds, better, *deserts.* islands, here for distant countries. Here there appears to be the wider prophetic reference to the judgment of the nations opposing Messiah. (19) so, *i.e.* when the delivering and redeeming power of God has been so gloriously manifested. like a flood, or like the river Euphrates. the Spirit, *etc.*, here the sugge tive indication that the conquests spoken of are to be *spiritual* ones. standard, or shall put him to flight.[a]

The enemy (*v.* 19).—I. There is an enemy. II. That enemy has tremendous influence, "like a flood." III. That enemy is unable to overcome the resources of God. Apply:—1. This promise of the Spirit must not discourage watchfulness, but must—2. Inspire hope.[b]

20, 21. (20) the Redeemer, so long promised. Here with fullest reference to Messiah. Ro. xi. 26. them .. Jacob, moral preparation for His reception being necessary. (21) my covenant, the new covenant. The inward work of Divine grace, through the Messiah, should be continuous and unchanging.[a]

National education presumed in the covenant with the Church (*v.* 21).—We will divide the subject into two parts. 1. The nature and fundamental principles of education; 2. The duties of the Church in regard to it.[b]

Bishop Latimer.—Every season of a religious revival has been marked by ministerial zeal and diligence. These features eminently distinguish the British reformers. Latimer, in particular, was remarkable for his care in preaching and visiting every part of his diocese, earnestly trying to reform whatever was amiss. Although advanced in life, he travelled continually from place to place, teaching, exhorting, and preaching, to the utmost of his ability. These journeys were mostly performed on foot, with few attendants, in a plain dress, with a pair of spectacles and a New Testament hanging at his girdle. Wherever he went he preached to the people; and if he found a number assembled together, and no church at hand, he did not hesitate to preach to them in any place which offered, and sometimes used a hollow tree for a pulpit.[c]

CHAPTER THE SIXTIETH.

1. **arise,** *comp.* ch. li. 17, lii. 2. Zion is here addressed as the restored city; and her condition after restoration is described in the ch.[a] **shine,** or, *be enlightened.* **thy light,**[b] the return of Divine favour. **glory . . Lord,** the Shechinah of the Godhead: figured as the morning sun, ushering in a new and joyous day.[c]

The Gospel era (*v.* 1).—I. The Gospel era is distinguished by a special revelation of the Divine glory. 1. The glory of His goodness is seen in the gift of His Son; 2. The glory of His goodness is seen in the entire history of His Son. II. The Gospel era imposes a special obligation upon the world. 1. Arise, to thought, penitence, gratitude, worship; 2. Shine, reflect the rays of this goodness.[d]

2, 3. (2) **darkness,** symbol of national calamity and distress.[a] **Lord . . thee,** as the sun rises to quicken and gladden the day. The symbol of prosperity and joy. **be seen,** shining forth manifestly, and attractively; winning others to Thee. (3) **Gentiles,** the heathen nations. **thy rising,** *i.e.* the Divine rising on thee.[b]

Moral darkness of the earth.—He who is sovereign in His dealings, and gives no accounts of His ways, has not equally distributed the light of saving truth; nor is there anything in the kingdom of grace corresponding to a remarkable fact in nature. Under the equator, each day consists of twelve hours of light and as many of darkness, the whole year round. But pass by one long stride to the polar regions, and according as the season is summer or winter, you stand beneath a sky which either enjoys perpetual day, or is wrapped in perpetual night. There, Dr. Kane and his ship's crew, for instance, never saw the sun for 140 long and weary days; but were left in those pagan lands on which the Gospel has never shone in unbroken night. During all that long period the sun never rose above the horizon to cheer their icy prison with one beam of light. Yet, taking the whole year round, the inhabitants of these dreary climes have the same period of light as we and others; for theirs are nightless summers, on which the stars never rise and the sun never sets, but wheels his burning chariot round and round the pole. Now, in regard to saving light and knowledge, we find nothing corresponding to these phenomena. Strange, mysterious Providence! there is no such equal diffusion of Gospel truth. We dare not doubt that God's ways are equal, and that eternity will shed a wondrous and glorious light on this gloomy mystery, but over a vast surface of our unhappy world we see only darkness—"gross darkness," unbroken night—nations that never hailed the rising of a better sun.[c]

4, 5. (4) **lift,** *etc.*, ch. xlix. 18. Describing the flocking of the nations to the restored Zion. **sons . . daughters,** the future inhabitants of the city, and members of the Church.[a] **nursed . . side,** or carried on the side.[b] (5) **flow together,** better, *shalt shine.* "The word expresses the cheerful indications of inward joy experienced by Jerusalem" **fear,** with the awe of those who feel themselves to be monuments of wondrous mercy. **be enlarged,** with the sense of God's faithfulness and goodness.

a The Greek, the Vulg., and the Chaldaic insert the explanatory word *Jerusalem.*

b Isa. ii. 2–5.

c "The glory of Jehovah is His manifested presence, with allusion to the cloudy pillar and the Shechinah."—*J. A. Alexander.*

d Dr. Thomas.

a "The kingdoms of the earth are breaking up amid gloom and misery."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b "The report of the distinguished excellence and felicity of the restored Church will bring strangers, and even monarchs, to view and participate in her blessedness."—*Henderson.*

Mat. ii. 1, 2, xii. 20–24, 32.

c. 3. *W. T. Young,* ii. 63; *Bp. Dehon,* i. 382.

The truly strong and sound mind is the mind that can embrace equally great things and small. I would have a man great in great things, and elegant in little things.

c Dr. Guthrie.

a "The nations amongst wh. the Jews are scattered shall bring them back to the Holy Land, with offerings and treasures to restore the Temple service, and re-

build Jerusalem." —*Mat. Arnold.*

b "It is the custom in the E. to carry the children astride on the hip, with the arms around the body."—*Fausset.*

"Hindu mothers may often be seen carrying a child seated on their hip."—*Spk. Com.*

c See ver. 9.

d *Fam. Treas.*

a "The dromedary is not a two-humped camel, but any camel wh. is used for riding purposes; any camel may be made a dromedary or a pack-camel as the owner thereof chooses; but there is no more ground for dividing the camel into two species than there is for dividing horses into distinct species as they are used for riding, or for the pack-saddle."—*Van Lennep.*

b Ge. xxv. 2, 4; 1 Chr. i. 33.

a "In Persia the pigeon-houses are large round towers, rather broader at the bottom than the top, crowned by conical spiracles, through wh. the pigeons descend. The extraordinary flights of pigeons which I have seen upon one of these buildings illus. the text. Their great numbers, and the compactness of their mass, literally looked like a cloud at a distance and ob-

sea, put for the maritime nations of the Mediterranean,[c] forces, or, *wealth.*

Mode of carrying children (*v.* 4).—Possibly this passage refers to the mode of carrying little children in the East, which is different from that prevailing in Europe. We have all seen a boy trudging to school on an examination morn, with a huge pile of books strapped together, and resting against his side, so as to require but little support from his arm. We must have also admired the dexterity with which swallows manage to rest nearly the entire weight of their bodies against the upright frames of windows. Indian children are taught to cling in a similar manner to the sides of their nurses. An arm put around them is then quite sufficient to prevent them from falling. The advantage of this mode is that it is much less fatiguing than the common practice; its disadvantage, that it imparts to the nurse who is carrying a child an inelegant waddle, from the weight being thrown all on one side.[d]

6, 7. (6) **camels**, chief beasts of burden on the caravan routes. **dromedaries**,[a] here, young camels; a merely poetical repetition. **Midian and Ephah**,[b] noted for their caravan trade. **Sheba**, or Arabia Felix; noted for its spices. (7) **Kedar**, ch. xxi. 17. **Nebaioth**, a tribe of Northern Arabia, which kept abundant flocks. **glorify . . glory**, *lit.* "my house of beauty will I beautify."

Children and flowers (*v.* 6).—I. How fresh they are. II. How beautiful they are. III. How innocent they are. IV How useful they are. V. But even flowers may be soiled. VI. I have known a worm in a flower, and in children we find envy, greed, passion. VII. Even flowers die.—*How God glorifies the Church* (*v.* 7).—I. The place, the Church. 1. Planned by Divine wisdom, erected by Divine power: 2. Contains special manifestations of the Divine presence and glory. II. The promise. 1. By accepting the services and offerings which are there performed: 2. By making it a place for special communion and fellowship with Himself; 3. By protecting it permanently against all the efforts of hostile powers; 4. By extending its influence: 5. By consummating it finally in the splendour and happiness of heaven.

8, 9. (8) **as a cloud**, borne rapidly along by the wind. **doves . windows, or *lattices.***[a] (9) **isles**, coast lands of the Medit. Sea. **Tarshish**,[b] Tartessus, a Spanish port used by the Phœnicians. **the name**, the new name of Deliverer, Restorer, Redeemer.

Revivals of religion (*v.* 8).—I. At some future period a vast multitude of mankind will be gathered unto the Church of Christ. II. This multitude will, in a great measure, consist of such persons as were not rationally expected to become Christians. III. These persons will enter the Church of their own accord with great earnestness of mind. IV. They will possess a dove-like character. Remarks:—1. It is evident that there will be hereafter a great revival of religion in the world; 2. This revival will furnish a solid foundation of joy to the universe: 3. The same things are partially true of every revival of religion: 4. We are bound faithfully to labour, and fervently to pray for the universal revival of religion.[c]

Doves, and their flight.—M. Savary (*Letters on Egypt*), speak-

ing of a victory, says, "On the morning of that memorable day, a pigeon was sent off from Manseura, to carry to Grand Cairo the news of the death of Facr Eddin, and of the flight of the Egyptians." This custom of employing pigeons to carry messages with expedition, which has so long subsisted in the East, is at present abolished. Possibly this practice of using the rapid swiftness of these birds for purposes of the utmost despatch, and the vehemence with which they returned to their accustomed habitations, may be alluded to by Isaiah, who, when describing the eagerness with which the flocks of Gentiles should crowd into the Church of Christ, says, "They shall fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows." Dr. Russell tells us, when pigeons were employed as posts, they not only placed the paper containing the news under the wing, to prevent its being destroyed by wet, but "used to bathe their feet in vinegar, with a view to keep them cool, so that they might not settle to drink or wash themselves, which would have destroyed the paper." "In the environs of the city, to the westward, near the Zainderood, are many pigeon houses, erected at a distance from habitations, for the sole purpose of collecting pigeons' dung for manure. They are large round towers, rather broader at the bottom than the top, and crowned by conical spiracles, through which the pigeons descend. Their interior resembles a honeycomb, pierced with a thousand holes, each of which forms a snug retreat for a nest. More care appears to have been bestowed upon their outside than upon that of the generality of the dwelling-houses, for they are painted and ornamented. The extraordinary flights of pigeons which I have seen alight upon one of these buildings afford, perhaps, a good illustration for the passage in Isaiah, 'Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?' Their great numbers, and the compactness of their mass, literally look like a cloud at a distance, and obscure the sun in their passage."[d]

10—12. (10) build . . walls, gladly rendering service to the Lord's people. my wrath, at thy rebellion and idolatry. smote thee, with the judgment of the captivity. (11) gates . . open, *comp.* Re. xxi. 25. The idea here is that the continual stream of people will compel the gates to be kept open.[a] forces, or wealth, *v.* 5. (12) not serve thee, a broad declaration that *righteousness*, which restored Israel represents, alone exalts any people.

Character and doom of a corrupt nation (*v.* 12).—I. The character of a corrupt nation. Text implies two things. 1. That there is a certain course of human life which the Bible recognises as serving the Lord; 2. That nations as well as individuals are bound to pursue that course. II. The doom of a corrupt nation. 1. It is most calamitous; 2. It is most certain. Our subject explains—(1) National convulsions; (2) The true method of promoting national stability.[b]

13, 14. (13) glory of Lebanon, *etc.*,[a] "a reminiscence of the building of Solomon's temple." place of my feet,[b] ch. lxvi. 1. (14) sons, or next generation. They shall acknowledge the wrongs of their fathers: and admit that Zion is the holy place, and the dwelling of Jehovah.

Excellency of the Church of Christ (*v.* 13).—I. The constitution of the Church of Christ. 1. The high and mighty shall be

secured the sun in their passage."—*Morier.*

b Isa. xxiii. 10.

c Dr. Dwight.

v 8. *E. Erskine*, iii. 365; *Dr. T. Dwight*, i. 231; *Dr. Wordsworth*, iv. 57.

d Morier.

"Revival in religion is that process by which there is in the minds of men throughout a church, or a district, a return from a religious languor, or recovery fr. moral apathy, to a universal and general sensitiveness to the influences of the Holy Spirit operating by religious truths and ordinances."—*Dr. J. T. Jenkyn.*

"Hypocrisy is the necessary burden of villany."—*Johnson.*

a "Here the open gates have their special reason assigned: to admit the ever instreaming world, with its offerings and homage."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b Dr. Thomas.

"Animalism is nothing; inventive spiritualism is all."—*Carlyle.*

a For the trees here specified see Isa. xli. 19.
b Ezc. xliii. 7.
c C. Simeon, M.A. *v.* 13. *J. H. Newman*, 320.
"'Come bending unto thee.' Who

in the East has not seen the humble suppliant come bending to ask forgiveness or to entreat a favour? See him go stooping along, with his hands spread out, till he come near his superior, and then, as in the next words, he bows himself down at his feet."—*Roberts.*

"Revivals make men devise liberal things. Money leaves the heart and gets to the hand, and the hand conveys it to the treasury of Christ."—*Jenkyn.*

"It is the peculiarity of the Christian religion, that humility and holiness increase in equal proportions."—*Wilberforce.*

d Dr. Cumming.

a "*Sholām* is here used, as in so many other places, for a period of long and unknown duration."—*Henderson.*

b "Thou shalt draw to thyself, and enjoy, all that is valuable of the possessions of the Gentiles."—*Fausset.*

c Dr. Thomas.

"The time shall come when every evil thing from being and remembrance both shall die. The world is one solid temple of pure gold."—*Bailey.*

Agents of revivals.—These are usually praying people. A

brought on a level with the lowest; 2. The poor, on the contrary, are raised to an equality with the highest. II. The excellence of that constitution. 1. As ornamental to the Church itself; 2. As honourable to God. Apply:—(1) Let us all seek to become members of the Church: (2) Let us endeavour to promote the establishment of the Church in the world.[c]

Christianity perfect in beauty.—Does Christianity really stand in need of additional splendour to its ritual, or of material ornament to its lessons? I conceive that there is something in the simple Gospel so majestic—something so transcending all that the pencil of the painter or the pen of the poet can embody—that Christianity seems to me adorned the most when it is adorned the least. Would you ever think of taking a few drops from a phial of attar of roses, in order to add to the perfume of the rose just gathered on a May morning, and wet with the dews of heaven? If that splendid monument of human genius were here, the Apollo Belvidere, unquestionably the product of the chisel of one of the most illustrious of ancient statuaries, should we applaud the taste of that man who would propose that the mercer's and the hatter's and the shoemaker's shops should furnish ornaments with which to deck it? Would you not say, There is something in the almost living lineaments of the form so noble, something in the contour and proportions of the marble so beautiful, that the richest clothing of man would deform, not dignify—dim, not reveal, its pure and simple glories? So is it with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is so beautiful in itself that all accessions of material beauty serve but to conceal or mar it. The Rose of Sharon is so fragrant, and its tints so lovely, that it needs no sprinkling from streams of the Isis—still less from the filthy waters of the Tiber—either to augment its perfume or to heighten its colours.[d]

15—17. (15) **no . . thee,** *i.e.* no traveller, trader, or caravan. **eternal excellency,** one who is for evermore honoured. Observe in the two clauses *many* stands as the equivalent of *eternal.*[a] (16) **suck,** *etc.*, fig. for receiving abundant wealth:[b] comp. *v.* 11. (17) **brass . . gold,** exchanging the less for the more valuable. In the time of the national distress the golden shields had to be exchanged for brazen ones. **exactors,** civil rulers, especially presiding over taxation.

The golden age (*v.* 17).—Morally this will include three things. 1. That for practical atheism there will be godliness; 2. That for dominant materialism there will be spirituality; 3. That for controlling selfishness there will be benevolence.[c]

Christianity and national prosperity.—During the last three centuries, to stunt the growth of the human mind has been her (the Church of Rome's) chief object. Throughout Christendom, whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her, and has everywhere been in inverse proportion to her power. The loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe have, under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor, while Protestant countries, once proverbial for sterility and barbarism, have been turned by skill and industry into gardens, and can boast of a long list of heroes and statesmen, philosophers and poets. Whoever, knowing what Italy and Scotland naturally are, and what, four hundred years ago, they

actually were, shall now compare the country round Rome with the country round Edinburgh, will be able to form some judgment as to the tendency of Papal domination. The descent of Spain, once the first among monarchies, to the lowest depths of degradation, the elevation of Holland, in spite of many natural disadvantages, to a position such as no commonwealth so small has ever reached, teach the same lesson. Whoever passes in Germany from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant principality; in Switzerland, from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant canton; in Ireland, from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant county, finds that he has passed from a lower to a higher grade of civilisation. On the other side of the Atlantic the same law prevails. The Protestants of the United States have left far behind them the Roman Catholics of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil. The Roman Catholics of Lower Canada remain inert, while the whole continent around them is in a ferment with Protestant activity and enterprise. The French have doubtless shown an energy and an intelligence which, even when misdirected, have justly entitled them to be called a great people. But this apparent exception, when examined, will be found to confirm the rule; for in no country that is called Roman Catholic, has the Roman Catholic Church, during several generations, possessed so little authority as in France

18—20. (18) **wasting**, *etc.*, the image of the most perfect security and peace. **gates praise**, *comp.* ch. iii. 26.[a] (19) **sun**, *etc.*, though these are the brightest things we know, their glory shall be eclipsed by the manifestation of God's power and grace in His restored Church.[b] (20) **thy sun**, *i.e.* thy true sun, the presence and glory of Jehovah. **days .. mourning**, the time of the Divine hiding, and Divine judgment.

Joyousness of Christianity.—Right joyous and delightsome is the religion of Him whose contemporaries exclaimed, "Thou art not yet fifty years old," when they misunderstood His statement, that "Abraham rejoiced to see His day and was glad." When He bade His disciples "rejoice that their names were written in heaven," Himself rejoiced with them, "Man of sorrows" as He was (Luke x. 20, 21). He who "took children in His arms," "looked upon young men, and loved them;" the disciple who lay nearest to His bosom, was perhaps the nearest His own age, the youngest of the twelve. In my experience the happiest youth is always the holiest. There is a peace in the believing consciousness of pardoned sin and assured acceptance in the sight of God, in the repose of soul on the precious promises, and quietude of conscience in the atonement of a Mediator, which operates as a charm and antidote to the trials of life, and the bitterness of death. So that the good man is a glad man, but his joy is no more the joy of the world than his sorrow is the "sorrow of the world." He is neither a mourning dove, nor a chattering magpie; he is not an ascetic, but neither is he a wanton; he does not sublimate and soar with the wings of an angel, but neither does he flutter with the flaps of a bat; never forgets that he is a man, and not a buffoon—a Christian, and therefore neither a butt for other men's wit, nor a bolt, like a perpetual revolver, for his own. There is as solid a difference between levity and light-heartedness, as between the crackling pyrotechnics that dazzle and disturb the night, and the natural sunlight that exhilarates the day.[c]

Bible, a religious book, a child's words, some startling providence, has precipitated a revival. The earnest prayers and labours of one person have turned a whole community upside down. God uses His people to do His work; and if these fail He can harness His enemies to draw the car of salvation.

"An ill man is always ill; but he is then worst of all when he pretends to be a saint."—*Lord Bacon.*

a Ld. Macaulay.

a "The most natural explanation of the last clause is that which makes it mean that the walls shall afford safety, and the gates occasion of praise."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b Re. **xxi. 25, xxii. 5.**

"These prophecies are already daily fulfilled in part in the Christian Church; but they wait for their perfect accomplishment in the end of the world, and in the second coming of Christ."—*S. Jerome.*

v. 19. *G. Whitefield*, 759, 615.

v. 20. *Dr. J. Duchal*, iii. 131; *D. Dickson*, 402; *J. M. Wynyard*, 200.

c J. B. Owen.

21, 22. (21) all righteous, emphasis on *all.*[a] the branch,[b] the righteous people are so called, regarded as one branch planted again in the old and sacred soil. glorified, by the goodness and abundance of the fruit.[c] For the figure of the *v.* comp. ch. v. 1. 2. (22) strong nation, only a few returned from Babylon, but they soon multiplied. in his time, He who accomplishes the work must be left to find the right time for doing it. God's time is ever the best time.

The ministries of time (*v.* 22).—I. Time tests the principles of human conduct. II. Time tests friendship. III. Time tries his test upon character. 1. The real struggle of a man's life is the crisis of his moral history: this time often holds in reserve; 2. God even commits His own vindication to time: 3. In the individual life, the grandest spiritual truths are often learned late; 4. But these ministries of time touch heart-nerves in passing; 5. Yet time has a ministry of consolation too.[d]

Benevolence of Christianity.—The erection of hospitals and infirmaries for the poor is one of the distinguishing ornaments and fruits of Christianity, unknown to the wisdom and humanity of pagan times. Compassionate consideration of the poor formed no part of the lessons of pagan philosophy; its genius was too arrogant and lofty to stoop to the children of want and obscurity. It soared in sublime speculation, wasted its strength in endless subtleties and debates: but, among the rewards to which it aspired, it never thought of "the blessedness of him that considereth the poor." You might have traversed the Roman empire in the zenith of its power, from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, without meeting with a single charitable asylum for the sick. Monuments of pride, of ambition, of vindictive wrath, were to be found in abundance; but not one legible record of commiseration for the poor. It was reserved for the religion whose basis is humility, and whose element is devotion, to proclaim with authority, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."[e]

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-FIRST.

1. the Spirit, *etc.*, used by Messiah of Himself, Lu. iv. 18. upon me, the Prophet speaks in his own name, declares the nature of his mission, and the fact that it was given to him by God. anointed me, the fact of the Divine selection of persons for particular missions was indicated by the outward act of anointing.[a] preach, or proclaim. meek,[b] or afflicted. Comp. terms used in Mat. v. 3, 5, xi. 5, 29. liberty, *etc.*, figures taken from the Jewish year of Jubilee.[c] opening, *etc.*, or "to those that are bound, complete deliverance."[d]

The Man of sorrows the Comforter (*vv.* 1, 2).—I. He is an appreciative Comforter. II. He is a sympathetic Comforter. III. He is a wise Comforter. IV. The main truth is, He is an intelligent Comforter.[e]

Rev. John Brown.—The eminence of the late Mr. Brown, of Haddington, both as a preacher and a writer, is well known. On a public occasion, where a man who professed the principles of infidelity was present, two sermons were delivered: the first of them by an ambitious young man, who delivered a very eloquent

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a Isa. liv. 13, lvii. 13.

b Or, "the shoot from My plant."

c Jno. xv. 8.

v. 21. *Luther*, i. 285; *Dr. J. Erskine*, i. 266.

v. 22. *Bp. Atterbury*, i. 88; *G. Harvest*, 279; *Dr. T. Leland*, i. 301; *Dr. A. Rees*, i. 1.

d *Dr. Stone.*

The Dutch endeavoured to monopolise the spice trade, by confining the nutmeg tree to the narrow limits of Bonda, and extirpating it from all other islands where it naturally grew; but the wild pigeons scattered the nuts over the Moluccas and adjoining islands, thus propagating the tree, and defeating the selfishness of the Dutch.

e *R. Hall.*

a 1 Sa. xvi. 3.

b Vulgate has, *mansuetis*, the *meek*, Greek has, the *poor*.

c Le xxv. 10; Je. xxxiv. 8, 9.

d *Henderson.*

"'The most complete opening,' viz. of the eyes to them that are bound."—*Faussett.*

v. 1. *T. Boston*, ix. 507; *H. E. Manning*, ii. 209; *J. Cooper*, iv. 267; *J. Williams*, 253; *Dr. Dewar*, 37; *W. Dyer*, i. 281; *D. R. Gordon*, iv. 23.

e *Stems and Twigs.*

and florid address; Mr. Brown followed, in one equally remarkable for its simplicity and earnestness. "The first preacher," said the sceptic to one of his friends, "spoke as if he did not believe what he said: the latter, as if he was conscious that the Son of God stood at his elbow."[f]

2. **acceptable year**, or gracious year. "The evangelical jubileee."[a] **day of vengeance**, prob. meaning the day of the vindication of God's people, which involves Divine vengeance upon their enemies.[b] **that mourn**, *comp.* Mat. v. 4.

Power of comfort.—But so have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death, and the colder breath of the north; and then the waters break from their enclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; and the flies do rise again from their little graves in walls, and dance awhile in the air, to tell that there is joy within, and that the great mother of creatures will open the stock of her new refreshment, become useful to mankind, and sing praises to her Redeemer. So is the heart of a sorrowful man under the discourses of a wise comforter; he breaks from the despairs of the grave, and the fetters and chains of sorrow; he blesses God, and he blesses thee, and he feels his life returning; for to be miserable is death, but nothing is life but to be comforted; and God is pleased with no music from below so much as in the thanksgiving songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing and comforted, and thankful persons.[c]

3. **to appoint**, settle, arrange, as a permanent thing.[a] **mourn in Zion**, lit. *the mourners of Zion:* ch. lvii. 18. **beauty**, or ornaments, a head-dress, or nuptial tiara.[b] **oil of joy**, in time of suffering or grief the oil of the toilette was not used. Its use was a sign of health and gladness.[c] **garment of praise**, the robe suited for a festive season. **spirit of heaviness**, or a despondent spirit, for which sackcloth might be suitable. **trees of righteousness**, or oaks. Evidently a fig. for a people bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. **glorified**, ch. lx. 21.

Mourners in Zion.—God will have mourners comforted, because they pray much. Mourners in Zion are great prayers; and great prayers shall certainly be great rejoicers. As clouds darken the heavens, and cause lowering weather, but being distilled into drops, then sweet sunshine and fair weather follow; so sorrows and troubles in the hearts of the saints seem to darken them till they be distilled in prayer and tears before the Lord; then the sweet beams of God's love graciously and comfortably shine upon them.[d]

4—6. (4) **build . . wastes**, ch. lviii. 12. (5) **strangers**, *etc.*,[a] ch. xiv. 1. 2. (6) **priests . . Lord**, *see* Ex. xix. 6. "The language implies holiness, spirituality, and devotedness to the service of God."[b] **eat**, *etc.*, comp. ch. lx. 6. **glory**, *etc.*, or "in their splendour ye shall *be substituted*, or substitute yourselves in their stead."[c]

The true preacher.—

He was humble, kind, forgiving, meek;
Easy to be entreated, gracious, mild;
And, with all patience and affection, taught,
Rebuked, persuaded, solaced, counsell'd, warn'd,

f R. T. S.

a Wordsworth.

b Is. lix. 18, 19.

v. 2. *Dr. R. Hawker*, iv. 261; *Is. Williams*, i. 253.

"In the multitude of our thoughts within us the Divine comforts do delight our souls; and it is they only that can do it. Miserable are all other comforters, and vain is all the comfort that they administer."—*Norris.*

c Bp. Taylor.

a "To make firm and stable arrangements for securing to them all that follows."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The ashes of lamentation for sin will be taken from their heads, and they will be crowned with a bridal diadem."—*Wordsworth.*

c Ps. xlv. 6, 7; He. i. 9.

v. 3. *Dr. Young*, 3; *J. Clowes*, 214; *A. W. Hare*, i. 475.

d J. Burroughs.

a "Earthly power (once so adverse) shall give its aid to the Church."—*Spk. Com.*

b Henderson.

c Maurer.

"The Jews, a nation of God's servants appointed to initiate the rest of the world into His service, are to give them-

selves to this sacred and priestly labour, while the rest of the world do their secular labour for them." —*Mat. Arnold.*

v. 6. *Dr. D. W. Garrow*, 393.

d Pollok.

In fervent style and manner. All
Saw in his face contentment, in his life
The path to glory and perpetual joy.
. . . A skilful workman he
In God's great moral vineyard : what to prune
With cautious hand he knew, what to uproot ;
What were mere weeds, and what celestial plants,
Which had unfading vigour in them, knew ;
Nor knew alone, but watch'd them night and day,
And rear'd and nourish'd them, till fit to be
Transplanted to the Paradise above.[d]

7—9. (7) **double,**[a] *i.e.* twice as much as had been violently taken from you ; ch. xl. 1, 2. **confusion,** or humiliation in your captive-time. **portion,** or blessed lot, as restored ones. which God will give you. **everlasting joy,** obs. how the word "everlasting" is used as equivalent to "the highest conceivable." (8) **love judgment,** this is given as the reason for His gracious dealings when Israel returns to righteousness. **robbery,**[b] that wh. is taken unjustly. (9) **seed,** Easterns valued so highly the retention of blessings through succeeding generations. **seed . . blessed,** Ge. xxii. 17, 18.

All hands at work (*v.* 7).—I. Address those who profess faith in Christ. Indicate the line of work for each, and exhort to that work. 1. The elders of the Church ; 2. The deacons of the Church ; 3. The trustees of the Church ; 4. The Sunday-school field ; 5. The praying circle. II. Address those who do not profess to be Christians. Here note some of the reasons that keep men back from membership.[c]

Mosque built by fraud.—An incident mentioned by Mrs. Poole, in her work, *The Englishwoman in Egypt*, shows that even a follower of the false prophet can feel the impropriety of such conduct as the text condemns. Speaking of the mosques at Cairo, she says, "Many of these buildings are doubtless monuments of sincere piety : but not a few have certainly originated in ways far from creditable to their founders. I passed by one, a handsome building, respecting which I was told the following anecdote. The founder, on the first occasion of opening his mosque for the ceremonials of the Friday prayers, invited the chief 'Ulama to attend the service, and each of these congratulated him before the congregation, by reciting some tradition of the prophet, or by some other words of an apposite nature, excepting one. This man the founder addressed, asking wherefore he was silent. 'Hast thou nothing to say,' he asked, 'befitting this occasion?' The man thus invited readily answered, 'Yes. If thou hast built this mosque with money lawfully acquired, and with a good intention, know that God hath built for thee a mansion in Paradise, and great will be thy felicity. But if thou raised this temple by means of wealth unlawfully obtained, by money exacted from the poor by oppression and tyranny, know that there is prepared for thee a place in hell, and evil will be the transit thither.' The latter was the case ; and within a few hours after he had thus spoken, the only one among the company of 'Ulama who had dared to utter the language of truth on this occasion—to do which, indeed, required no little courage—suddenly died, a victim as was well known, of poison."

a "Double is used indefinitely to denote a large proportion."—*J. A. Alexander.*

b "It is a truth much to the honour of God that ritual services will never atone for the violation of moral precepts, nor will it justify any man's robbery to say, 'it was for burnt-offerings,' or *Corban*, it is a gift." —*Mat. Henry.*

c Dr. Talmage.

"In 'Holy Fraud' I like the Christian but not the surname thereof, and wonder how any can marry these two together in the same action, seeing surely the parties were never agreed."—*Fuller.*

"The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat oneself. All sin is easy after that." —*Bailey.*

"Satan was the first that practised falsehood under saintly show, deep malice to conceal, couch'd with revenge."—*Milton.*

10, 11. (10) **I . . rejoice,** the Prophet speaks as anticipating and even already possessing the promised blessings. For the figures comp. *v.* 3.[a] **ornaments,** the allusion is to the mitre and golden crown of the high priest when fully attired. **bride,** ch. xlix. 18.[b] (11) **for,** *etc.*, Ps. lxxii. 3, lxxxv. 11; Isa. xlv. 8, lv. 10, 11. **bud,** or springing shoots. **all the nations,** or universally.

Conversion of the world (*v.* 11).—I. The comparison here instituted between the natural and the moral world—barren if not cultivated, fruitful when brought under cultivation. 1. So are those countries that are destitute of spiritual cultivation; 2. By the Gospel a great change is wrought; 3. This effected by the instrumentality of man; 4. But the power that effects it is God's alone. II. The change itself which is predicted in it. 1. The change described; 2. The excellency of it. Apply:—(1) What you should seek for yourselves; (2) What you should desire for the world at large.[c]

Just as I am.—An Indian and a white man, at worship together, were both brought under conviction by the same sermon. The Indian was shortly after led to rejoice in pardoning mercy. The white man, for a long time, was under distress of mind, and at times ready to despair; but he was at last brought also to a comfortable experience of forgiving love. Some time after, meeting his red brother, he thus addressed him:—"How is it that I should be so long under conviction, when you found comfort so soon?" "Oh, brother," replied the Indian, "me tell you. There come along a rich prince. He propose to give you a new coat. You look at your coat, and say, 'I don't know; my coat pretty good. I think it will do a little longer.' He then offer me new coat. I look on my old blanket. I say, 'This good for nothing.' I fling it right away and accept the beautiful garment. Just so, brother, you try to keep your own righteousness for some time; you loth to give it up; but I, poor Indian, had none; therefore I glad at once to receive the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ."[d]

a "Jerusalem may be here personified. Instead of any longer sitting in the dust, in squalid attire, and with a downcast look, she is decked in the most splendid festal garments."—*Henderson.*

b Re. xix. 7, 8, xxi. 2.

v. 10. *J. Farmer*, 73; *J. H. Newman*, 176; *Hon. S. Best*, 96.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

Before the capture of Richmond, and at other times during the war, officers entered the meetings where penitents were seeking Christ, and gave the order, "Fall in for the front!" Duty begins at the altar; and the convert must enter the conflict as the soldier prepares for battle.

d Bowes.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-SECOND.

1, 2. (1) **will I,** the speaker is the Prophet, but he stands for the Messiah.[a] **hold my peace,** either from witnessing, or prayer. **righteousness,** or *saving health.*[b] **as brightness,** or light shining out of darkness. **lamp,** *comp.* Ge. xv. 17. (2) **thy righteousness,** the quality in them. **thy glory,** the blessedness given to them. **new name,** Re. ii. 17. After the return Jerusalem appears to have been called, *the Holy City.*

The prevailing inefficiency of the Church and the remedy (*v.* 1).—I. The prevailing inefficiency of the means employed for promoting the cause of religion. 1. Not doctrinal unsoundness; 2. Not strife; 3. Not lack in the system: 4. But power, earnestness. II. The means by which we may be aroused to that high earnestness which properly belongs to the Christian profession. 1. We must be impressed with the sin of apathy; 2. We must have a due sense of our mission: 3. We must individually possess an interest in the cross of Christ.

3, 4. (3) **in the hand,** in order that God may look upon it,

a "For these blessings (of ch. lxi.) the Prophet will not cease to pray and wrestle until they arrive, and the glorious salvation of the renewed Zion shines forth."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b "'Until her *Just One* go forth as brightness, and her *Saviour* be lighted as a lamp.'"—*Vulgate.*

and admire it.[a] (4) forsaken, Heb. *azubah*,[b] wh. strikingly contrasts with *Hephzibah*.[c] Beulah, or *married*, held, possessed, and inhabited.[d]

The Church a royal diadem (*v.* 3).—I. In what estimation God holds His Church and people. 1. As an emblem of His power; 2. As a monument of His love; 3. As an object of His peculiar care. II. The interest which we also, from this consideration, should take in their welfare. Being dear to us, we should take an interest—1. In the Church at large: 2. In the Jewish Church in particular. Apply:—(1) What obligations we are under to look well to our ways; (2) What encouragement we have to labour for the Lord.[e]

Flowers from the wilderness.—Mr. Ellis, in his *Three Visits to Madagascar*, writes:—"I ultimately succeeded in adding some of the plants obtained in this remote region to my own collection at home, and one, a fine *Angræcum superbum*, which I recently exchanged for a plant from India, with a nurseryman near London, bore, during the spring, a number of large, pure white flowers, which, I have since been informed, were selected on account of their rarity and beauty to form part of the bridal bouquet on the occasion of the recent nuptials of the Prince of Prussia with the Princess Royal of England,—an honour which few could have supposed a plant originally growing in a Malagasy wilderness ever would attain." So have many martyr spirits ascended above from the bondage, stake, and Tarpeian rock of Madagascar to sparkle in the diadem of Jesus, at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

5. marrieth, used in the sense of "gaineth possession of thee." The captive people may be said to marry Jerusalem when they came back and took possession of her.[a]

God's delight in His people (*v.* 5).—I. God's relation to His people. 1. The words primarily relate to the Jewish Church; 2. They may also be applied to the Church of Christ. II. His delight in them. 1. No earthly joy superior to that which a bridegroom feels on his wedding day; 2. Such is God's delight in the objects of His choice. Apply:—(1) Let us all desire this high honour; (2) Let those who stand in this near relation walk worthy of it.[b]

6, 7. (6) watchmen, evidently here men of prayer, who are to look out for the first signs of the Lord's returning mercy to Zion. make mention, or, ye who are the Lord's remembrancers, keeping Him in mind of His promises. not silence, *i.e.* never cease from urgent intercession.[a] (7) no rest, lit. *silence*. "Constrain Him to utter His decree for Zion's salvation."

Necessary preparation for the millennium (*v.* 7).—I. What is implied in establishing Jerusalem and making her a praise in the earth,—Jerusalem, a figurative term for the Church, the establishing of which is its pervading influence in the world. II. It is the purpose of God to do all this for the earth. III. In accomplishing this work, God will employ human agency.[b]

Note on v. 6.—The image in this place is taken from the temple service, in which there was appointed a constant watch day and night by the Levites. Now the watches in the East, even to this day, are performed by a loud cry from time to time by the

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a Ewald.

The diadem was held in God's hand until the time came for its being placed, in all its completeness, upon the brow of Messiah.

b Azubah was the name of Jehoshaphat's mother, 2 Chr. xx. 31.

c Hephzibah, or "My delight is in her," was the name of Hezekiah's wife, 2 Ki. xxi. 1.

d Isa. liv. 4–6; Re. xxi. 2–4.

v. 4. *Jon. Edwards*, ii. 17.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

a "It bodes well to a land when its own natives and inhabitants are pleased with it, prefer it before other lands, when its princes marry their country, and resolve to take their lot with it."—*Mat. Henry.*

b C. Simeon, M.A.

a "The Prophet entreats these watchmen to ply their office without ceasing, until Jerusalem is restored."—*Mat. Arnold.*

vv. 6, 7. *H. Wilkinson*, iii. 68; *J. Hill*, 336.

b W. C. Walton, M.A.

"It is as one who stands by the margin of a lake, and gazes on his own image close beneath him; conceive this contemplator of himself borne gradu-

watchmen, to mark the time, and that very frequently, and in order to show that they themselves are constantly attentive to their duty. "The watchmen in the camp of the caravans go their rounds, crying one after another, 'God is one, He is merciful;' and often add, 'Take heed to yourselves'" (Tavernier). The reader will observe in this extract how mention is made of the name of God by the watchmen (Burder).

8, 9. (8) **arm**, *etc.*, Ps. lxxxix. 10. The instrument of accomplishing His will and purpose. **sons . . stranger**, members of foreign nations. (9) **gathered . . eat**, the indication of national security and tranquillity.[a]

Parable of industry.—Geron, an old man of eighty, was sitting at the door of his rural dwelling, when a youth from town came to him and entered into conversation. When he heard the number of his years, he marvelled at his healthy and vigorous appearance, and asked Geron what he had done to enjoy such strength and serenity in the winter of his life. Geron answered, "My son, this is like every good gift from above, yet we must do something here below to obtain it." Then the old man rose, and took the stranger to the orchard, showed him the high, splendid trees laden with delicious fruit. Then the old man said, "Dost thou marvel that I now enjoy the fruit of these trees? Behold, my son, I planted them in my youth. Here thou hast the mystery of my quiet, fruitful old age." The youth bowed his head, for he understood the old man's words, and pondered them in his heart.[b]

10, 11. (10) **go through**, *comp.* ch. xl. 3. In imagination, the triumphant return seems already begun.[a] **a standard**, for the people to rally round.[b] (11) **daughter of Zion**, here meaning the rightful inhabitants of Jerusalem. **salvation**, better, *Saviour*, see Mat. xxi. 5; Jno. xii. 15.

Go through the gates (*v.* 10).—I. There are gates which we cannot help going through,—the gate of life and the gate of death. II. There are gates through which we should escape,—the gate out of sin; out of temptation; out of bondage. III. There are gates through which we should strive to enter into the kingdom of grace,—by the gate of repentance; by the gate of faith; by the gate of obedience. IV. There are gates which shut us in for eternity,—there is the gate of hell and the gate of heaven.[c]

Roads in the East.—Irwin, speaking of his passing through the deserts on the eastern side of the Nile, in his going from Upper Egypt to Cairo, tells us "that after leaving a certain valley which he mentions, their road lay over level ground. As it would be next to an impossibility to find the way over these stony flats, where the heavy foot of a camel leaves no impression, the different bands of robbers (wild Arabs, he means) who frequent that desert, have heaped up stones at unequal distances for their direction through this desert. We have derived great assistance from the robbers in this respect, who are our guides when the marks either fail, or are unintelligible to us." After which he remarks, that if it be considered that this road to Cairo is seldom trodden, it is no wonder that those persons they had with them as conductors were frequently at a loss to determine their way through the desert. The learned know very well that ally aloft towards the heavens, and the image which he still beholds as he soars will deepen in proportion as he rises."—*Archer Butler.*

a "The enemies of Israel having all been swept away by the powerful judgments of God, the most perfect tranquillity shall reign throughout the land, and those who may go up to worship at Jerusalem shall enjoy unmolested the fruit of their labour." — *Henderson.*

b Krummacher.

a The peoples on the way are here bidden to remove obstacles, and make a plain path for God's people.

vv. 10, 11. *Dr. R. Hawker*, iv. 361; *R. Morehead*, ii. 420.

b Isa. lx. 3.

c J. Bolton.

"Shall the husbandman for the sake of the harvest, waste his strength and bear the burden and heat of the day, and then, when the ripe corn tempts the sickle, in very wantonness refuse to reap, and let it be destroyed? Shall the Lord Jesus undertake to suffer for us—shall He actually toil, and groan, and grieve, and die for us—

and then let the fruit of all His sufferings be lost, and leave us to perish in our sins? No, it cannot be. It is impossible to exaggerate the certainty and freeness of that salvation that is in Christ for all who will but lay hold of it. It is impossible that anything in the universe can lie between you and eternal life, if you but accept it as 'the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." —*Caird.*

"Hypocrites do the devil's drudgery in Christ's livery."—*Matthew Henry.*

d Harmer.

a Spk. Com.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

The devil never destroys poor souls more effectually than when he hides himself under virtue's cloak.

there are many great deserts in various parts of the East, and, in particular, a great desert between Babylon and Judæa; and as Judæa was, in the time of the captivity, an abandoned country, at least as to a great part of it, and the road through that desert might have been much neglected, is it not reasonable to suppose that the piling up heaps of stones might actually be of considerable importance to facilitate the return of Israel into their own country? And if not, is it not natural to suppose the difficulties in the way of their return might be represented by want of such works? And consequently, that that clause should be rendered not "gather out the stones," but "throw ye up heaps of stones," that you may be directed in your march through the most difficult and dangerous places where you are to pass. It is certain the word *sakkeloo* that is used here is, confessedly, in every other place but one—Is. v. 2—used to signify the throwing stones at a person, after which they were wont to cover them with a heap of them, as a memorial of what was done: see particularly the account of the punishment of Achan, Josh. vii. 25, 26. Now it must appear somewhat strange that the same word should signify gathering stones up in order to take them away, and also, on the contrary, to cover over a person or a spot with them, thrown up on a heap. And especially when the stoning the ways, that is, pouring down heaps of stone at proper distances to direct travellers in danger of mistaking their way, is so natural a thought in this passage; while we find few or no traces of the gathering stones out of an Eastern road, to make journeying more pleasant to the traveller.[d]

12. **holy people**, *v.* 2, ch. lxi. 6. **redeemed**, ch. xxxv. 9, 10. **sought out**, "men would resort to her to see her glory and to examine into the wonders which God had wrought for her."[a]

Restoration of the Jews (*vv.* 10—12).—I. The preparation to be made for them. 1. We should prepare their way before them; 2. We should lift up the standard of the cross before them. II. The proclamation to be reported to them. 1. The Saviour's advent; 2. The benefits He will confer upon them. Apply:—(1) Take care that you experience these things in your own souls; 2. Endeavour to promote the experience of them among your Jewish brethren.[b]

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-THIRD.

1. **who is this**, a conqueror, with blood-stained garments, is supposed to appear. The spectators ask, Who is he? **Edom**, the neighbour, but bitter enemy of Israel.[a] **Bozrah**? a place in Hauran, to the north of Edom. **glorious**, decked: evidently some great king or champion. **travelling**, lit. *bending*, as sign of evident eagerness and haste. **speak in righteousness**, or speak truly. The answer of the champion.[b]

A mighty Saviour (*v.* 1).—I. What are we to understand by the words, "to save"? II. How can we prove that Christ is mighty to save? III. Why is Christ mighty to save? 1. Because of the infinite efficacy of His atoning blood: 2. By the infinite energy of the Holy Spirit. IV. What are the inferences that are to be derived from the fact that Jesus is mighty to save?

a a kind of short drama, of sublime grandeur, the Prophet exhibits God Himself as returning from executing vengeance upon Edom." —*Mat. Arnold.*

b Ps. xlv. 3, 4.

v. 1. *Dr. J. Witherspoon*, iii. 61; *R. Warnford*, i. 365; *Dr. H. Dru-*

1. That ministers should preach in faith, nothing wavering ; 2. That those who pray should pray on ; 3. That those who are not saved should at once hope in His mercy.[c]

Able to save.—
A lowly Man—He takes my sins, and bears the heavy load ;
A lowly Man—He takes my hand, and leads me up the road ;
And when I know this lowly Man is my Creator ! God !
Oh, this hath solved me much dark speech ; and loosed tongues that were dumb !
For all creation round me now a gospel has become ;
And what had seemed to me before mere wild, confused Babel,
Is now a fire-tongued Pentecost proclaiming,—Christ is able !
The thunders, in the crashing skies, announce it as they roll ;
The lightnings, on the black storm wall, write it in vivid scroll ;
And stars repeat it, down the dark, in mystic jewelled light,
The Urim and the Thummim on the breastplate of the night ;
And strong Orion shouts to me what slumbered in old fable,
And echoes from eternal night-vaults answer, Able ! Able !
And comet, cresting bended heavens, waves echo to the word,
Like waving white plume in the star-mailed helmet of the Lord :
For all creation its evangel utters forth abroad,
Into mine ear, when now I know my Saviour Christ is God ![d]

2—4. (2) red, it was noticeable that his garments were deeply dyed or stained. treadeth . . winefat, and so is as if splashed with the grape-juice.[a] (3) alone, single-handed fighting the foe. tread them, the enemies of God's people, typified in Edom. So in the salvation wrought by Messiah, He alone did it, and all the glory must be given to Him. (4) day of vengeance, for working the vengeance necessary for the deliverance of God's people.

The wine-press.—"Treading" is invariably mentioned in Scripture as the process by which the juice was pressed from the grapes ; and the press is described, not as a movable utensil, but as being dug or built. So in the paintings of Egypt, and in existing usage, the wine-press is either dug in the ground, and lined with masonry, or built upon the ground ; and the hollow being filled with grapes, the men get in and tread upon them, the expressed juice being discharged by a spout into another receptacle prepared for the purpose. The cut exhibits a complete specimen of the wine-press of this kind, and explains many Scriptural references. It is square, the upper part being made hollow to receive the grapes. The treaders stand in them more than ankle deep. The juice, as expressed, is seen to come out at a spout, and fall into a vat. The whole is enclosed within a framework, the use of which is to sustain the ropes by which the men hold on. In other representations of humbler treadings, where the grapes seem to be placed in a hollow dug in the ground, the men hold by a single rope stretched horizontally between the tops of two upright poles. It appears from Jer. xxv. 33 ("He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes"), and xlviii. 33 ("None shall tread with shouting"). that the Hebrew wine-pressers cheered their labour by joyful acclamations (the proper meaning), as they jumped upon the grapes. The custom of treading grapes, at least in the first instance, still exists in different parts of Europe.[b]

per, iii. 1 ; *Bp. Sandford*, 33 ; *Dow, S. Best*, 113 ; *R. Robinson*, 373 ; *A. Fuller*, 515 ; *W. Burgh*, 178.

c C. H. Spurgeon.

"We must all rise so high into the Spirit of the eternal God that we can take men, straw and chaff and all, and gather them with the many imperfections of the vehicles in which they grow."—*Beecher.*

d W. B. Robertson.

a See Is. xvi. 10.

v. 4. *E. Erskine*, ii. 426 ; *M. Henry*, 735.

"Having spoiled His enemies on the cross, He further makes a public triumphal show of them in His own person, which is a second act ;—as the manner of the Roman emperors was, in their great triumph, to ride through the city in the greatest state, and have all the spoils carried before them, and the kings and nobles whom they had taken : and this did Christ at His ascension plainly manifesting by His open show of them that He had spoiled and fully subdued them."—*T. Goodwin.*

b Abg. fr. Kitto.

5, 6. (5) none to help, none able, or willing. wondered, at the prostrate, helpless state of a people who had the covenant and the promises. mine own arm, ch. lix. 16. (6) tread, *etc.*, *v.* 3.

Supernatural assistance.—The belief of a supernatural assistance is so reasonable, so consonant to our ideas of the Divine goodness and of human frailty, that philosophers, even in the heathen world, were sensible how much it was wanted, and have expressly asserted that, without Divine assistance, no man could make a progress either in wisdom or virtue. What reason suggested to them, revelation has ascertained to us, which represents us as temples and habitations of the Holy Spirit.[a]

7. mention, *etc.*, the drama here ends, and the tone changes; the Prophet recalls God's gracious dealings in the earlier times,[a] according to all, or as beseemeth all.

Loving-kindness of the Lord (*v.* 7).—I. What there is in the loving-kindness of the Lord that deserves particular attention. 1. Its freeness and sovereignty; 2. Its richness and variety; 3. Its constancy and continuance. II. In what manner and for what ends we should notice it. 1. As to the manner; 2. As to the ends. Apply:—What matter is here—(1) For reproof; (2) For encouragement.[b]

Good out of evil.—The author of *Struggles for Life; or, The Autobiography of a Dissenting Minister*, gives from his own life-story an interesting illustration of how God from seeming evil is often if not always found educing good. Before narrating the incident, it may be remarked that, when quite an infant, he suffered from water on the brain, which caused his head to be so unnaturally large, that a cap as large as one belonging to his mother was required to cover it. For two years and a half he had not grown an inch from the hour of his birth. "When," he says, "I had reached my sixth year, an occurrence took place which it was feared would terminate in the blindness of one of my eyes. Still weak, and always suffering from headache,—although otherwise the symptoms of my affliction were gradually disappearing,—I was quite unfit to take part in those boyish sports which promote strength and activity; I could only look on while others were actively engaged. On one occasion I was thus sitting alone, a silent witness of the sports of the neighbouring children, when a mischievous boy, notorious for his wild conduct, threw a stone at me, which hit me on the right eye, wounding it severely. I remember quite distinctly at this moment that nothing could induce me to remove my hand from the wounded eye. For three months, day after day, I kept my hand upon it. The quantity of water which constantly trickled from the wound was surprising. I believe, however, that that occurrence was the means of removing the water from my head, and that the warmth of the hand tended to draw it out. To the wanton act of that boy I trace, under an overruling Providence, my deliverance from a disease which might have caused physical helplessness or mental weakness for life. Previously, my parents had tried to teach me the alphabet; but they found it so difficult to give me an idea of the difference between one letter and another, that the sorrowing fear came upon them that it would be impossible to give me education. . . Judge, therefore, of their surprise when, after the healing of the wounded eye, they found

a G. Carr.

"The casting down of our spirits in true humility is like throwing a ball on the ground, which makes it rebound the higher towards heaven." — *John Mason.*

a "From this *v.* to the end of the foll. ch. God's people are provided with a formulary of confession and supplication, couched in the elegiac form, pathetic and elegant."—*Henderson.*
v. 7. *Dr. E. Hawkins*, 51.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

Some years ago there was an excellent minister in France, by the name of Oberlin. One day he was reading in the Old Testament where God told the Jews that He expected them to give a tithe, *i.e.* a tenth, of all their property to Him. Mr. Oberlin said to himself—"Well, I am sure that I, as a Christian, have three times as many blessings as the Jews had. If it was right for a Jew to give one-tenth of his property to God, surely I ought to give at least three times as much as that." So he made up his mind to do this. Out of every ten dols. that he received he laid aside three to give to God and the poor. Out of every hundred dollars he laid aside thirty. He kept

that my acquisition of the rudiments of education was extremely rapid. It seemed as if some slumbering power had been suddenly awakened, some undiscovered faculty at once called into action. It is a fact that, within a few months from that time, I could read a chapter in the New Testament, not only without difficulty, but correctly and even fluently."

8, 9. (8) **for he said,** should be, "*and* He said." "God had acted to Israel with the trustfulness which a parent shows to his children." **children . . lie,** or not deal falsely.[a] (9) **he was afflicted,**[b] in the greatness of His sympathy with them, and anxiety for them to get the best blessings out of the chastisement. **angel of his presence,** wh. was the sign and manifestation to them of His presence. True only in the fullest sense of Christ. **in his love,** De. vii. 7, 8.

Vexing the Holy Spirit (*vv.* 8—10).—Consider this as—I. Fulfilled in the Jewish people. 1. God's expectations from them were reasonable; 2. But they most grievously disappointed Him: 3. His resentment, therefore, was most just. II. As recorded for our instruction. 1. Has not God been disappointed in us? 2. May we not then well expect that His anger should be kindled against us?[c]—*Lore of God towards His people* (*v.* 9).—I. His tender compassion towards ourselves. II. The wonderful deliverance He vouchsafes to us. III. The continued care with which He watches over us. Address—(1) Those who are the Lord's only in name and profession; (2) Those who are His in deed and in truth.[d]

The tenderness of Christ.—Never will the writer forget his last brief interview with a venerated and godly man who lived to be ninety years of age. A smile of recognition, a hearty grasp of the hand, and a few pleasant words, were all which the circumstances admitted. Before parting with my hand he remarked, "One passage of Scripture has been dwelling much upon my mind. It is in the parable of the Lost Sheep: 'He layeth it upon His shoulders.' The thought of lying upon Christ's shoulders is very delightful to me in my weakness: I feel so secure and so happy resting upon His shoulders!" His look and gesture corresponded with the similitude. I went away soliloquising, "Ah, yes, aged saint, there is no place to lie on like Christ's shoulders; no one can pluck thee thence. Why fear the ravening, howling wolf? What mountains did the Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls cross? What enemies did He meet? Of the people there was none with Him: yet on He went in His search, with bleeding feet and hands, His head filled with dew, and His locks with the drops of night. As the rescued ones are borne back to the fold, and as they feel the gentle pressure of the Good Shepherd's hand, how do love and joy overflow!"

10, 11. (10) **rebelled,** against His guidance and authority.[a] **holy Spirit,** or Spirit of holiness; the wise, loving, gracious Spirit that inspired all the Divine plans for them.[b] **he fought,** with Divine punishments and judgments. (11) **he remembered,** better rendered impersonally "some one among them remembered."[c] **where is he,** for under judgment God seems to men as if He had forsaken them. **shepherd,** here Moses.

Vexing the Spirit (*v.* 10).—The Spirit of God is styled—1. The

on doing this all his life, and God blessed him for it, and he always had as much money as he needed.

a "The expression of a reasonable expectation of what the Jewish nation would have proved, considering the peculiar relation into wh. they had been brought to Jehovah." — *Henderson.*

b "'In all their affliction He did not afflict them,' *i.e.*, so as to abandon them to it, or leave them in it, without pity or deliverance." —*So the Targums.* *v.* 9. *T. Rogers,* ii. 338; *J. Hyatt,* 185.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d Ibid.

"He likewise taught that upon all who were convinced of these truths, and were anxious to fulfil the Divine commandments, Divine assistance would be bestowed. He alone ennobled virtue, by the assurance of an eternal reward, and gave dignity to this probatory scene, by representing it as introductory to a glorious and ever-during state of felicity." —*Elizabeth Hamilton.*

a Ex. xv. 24; Nu. xiv. 11; Ps. lxxviii. 56, xcv. 9.

b Ac. vii. 51.

c Stier.

v. 10. *J. Howe,* vi. 239.

Spirit of truth ; 2. Of grace ; 3. Of faith : 4. Of contrition and repentance ; 5. Of love ; 6. Of power and life ; 7. Of holiness ; 8. It is a heavenly Spirit. Show how in each case a man may vex the Spirit of God.[d]

Sinners against the Holy Spirit.—We are sure that if you could analyse the history of men who have grown grey in iniquity ; who, with one foot in the grave, are as busy as ever in the amassing of property ; and who, haunted by the memory of pleasures which they can no longer enjoy, assume the air of the gay and debauched, and who, moreover, appear quite deadened to moral attack, so that there is no working upon them by the decrepitude of old age, and nothing startling in the solitariness of having outlived every companion, and nothing piercing in the chime of the funeral knell—if, we say, you could analyse the history of these men, we are persuaded you would find that they began with just quieting conscience by a promise or excuse, with resisting the inward admonition, in little and apparently trifling things ; and thus they gradually took off, as it were, the edge of the weapon, and then they could resist in great things with as much facility as they had before done in little, till at last no effort was required, and they could sin as a matter of course : and they are gliding into eternity with a quenched and crushed conscience, though even now there may be moments when that rejected principle, breaking from sleep into delirium, shakes over the soul the scourge of an avenging fury. But, alas, it is only the spectre of conscience—a fleeting thing, as it were a dream or a ghost story. It is the men who have thus succeeded in making themselves inaccessible to alarm, so that they can go on committing the part of suicide without being disquieted ; it is these, we affirm, who have well-nigh reached the last stage of sin against the Spirit. They have so provoked that Spirit, by continued and increasing opposition, that it has ceased to strive with them ; and what does this amount to but having "quenched the Spirit"? And is not, therefore, the likelihood most fearful that they will be given over to final impenitence? If so, what follows but that, having "quenched the Spirit," they have done that frightful thing of which the Lord Jesus hath said, "it shall never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come"?[e]

12—14. (12) **Moses**, the hand, or instrument. God the arm, or the real power. **dividing**, *etc.*, Ex. xiv. 21. (13) **deep**, of the Red Sea : a way they could not have provided ; a way in which they had to put themselves entirely into God's guidance. (14) **as a beast**, the fig. is taken from the custom of animals, who go down into the sheltered and fertile valleys for food and rest.[a]

God contemplated (*vv.* 11—14).—I. In a way of grateful recollection. 1. The wonders wrought for Israel ; 2. They are not less interesting to us. II. In a way of affectionate inquiry it should be made by us. 1. That we may obtain similar mercies at His hands ; 2. That we may render Him the honour due to His name. Apply :—What improvement to make of your troubles. What to expect at the hand of God.[b]

Note on vv. 13, 14.—The Prophet Isaiah makes an allusion to the horse, which is apt, from the difference of our manners and feeling, to leave an unfavourable impression upon the mind ; it

d J. Howe. Emblems of the Holy Spirit.—Water—cleansing, fertilising, refreshing, abundant, freely given. Fire—purifying, illuminating, searching. Wind—independent, powerful, sensible in its effects, reviving. Oil—healing, comforting, illuminating, consecrating. Rain and dew—fertilising, refreshing, abundant, imperceptible, penetrating. A dove—gentle, meek, innocent, forgiving. A voice—speaking, guiding, warning, teaching. A seal—impressing, securing, authenticating.

"In times when vile men held the high places of the land, a roll of drums was employed to drown the martyr's voice, lest the testimony of truth from the scaffold should reach the ears of the people,—an illustration of how men deal with their own consciences, and seek to put to silence the truth-telling voice of the Holy Spirit." —*Arnot.*

e H. Melvill.

a "As the cattle go instinctively down to sheltered places for their rest, so Israel was led to places of rest and security."—*Mat. Arnold.*

b C. Simeon, M.A. There are two precious words often used in the mouth of Christ. "Whosoever will, let him take the

occurs in the sixty-third chapter, and runs in these terms: "That led them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble. As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest; so didst Thou lead Thy people, to make Thyself a glorious name." If these words be understood as merely referring to the unobstructed course of a single horse in the plain, and the descent of a beast into the valley to repose,—the allusion, more especially considering the general beauty and sublimity which characterise the style of Isaiah, seems rather flat and mean; and this is the more surprising when it is considered that the Prophet is here describing a scene by which the Lord acquired to Himself a glorious name, and which, by consequence, demanded no common strength or magnificence of thought. Nor does it appear for what reason, in order to rest, a herd should descend into a valley: for the hills must be equally pleasing and comfortable places of repose as the vales. We shall find it in the manners of the Arabian, to which the simile refers; and a very little attention is necessary to convince a dispassionate inquirer that the image is most lively and magnificent.[c]

15, 16. (15) look down, Ps. lxxx. 14. zeal, or jealousy of Thy great name. sounding . . bowels, "the metaphor is from strings tightly stretched, and giving, therefore, a louder and deeper sound."[a] "This is a mournful and piteous appeal from Israel to God."[b] (16) Abraham, *etc.*, this is a strong way of pleading that though in exile, and seeming aliens, they yet were really God's people. They humbly cling to their relationship, "Thou art our Father."

God's relation to the good (*v.* 16).—Consider this as a fact—I. Most encouraging under trial. The word Father implies—1. Spiritual causation; 2. Spiritual resemblance; 3. Spiritual education: 4. Spiritual providence. Redeemer implies—(1) Original captivity; (2) Present deliverance. II. As a fact independent of man's acknowledgment, whether by—1. Politically; 2. Scientifically; 3. Ecclesiastically great men.[c]

17–19. (17) made us to err, in these words they do not mean to accuse God as the source of their sins, but merely indicate their intense feelings as suppliants. But it is true that God sometimes punishes the wilful by "hardening their heart."[a] (18) possessed, or held possession of the promised land and holy city. little while, such it seemed in their view. adversaries, Babylon, and the other heathen nations. (19) called . . name, better, "Thy name was not called upon them."[b]

Origin of a wicked heart.—A caviller once asked Dr. Nettleton of America, "How came I by my wicked heart?" "That," he replied, "is a question that does not concern you so much as another, namely, how you shall get rid of it. You have a wicked heart, which renders you entirely unfit for the kingdom of God; and you must have a new heart, or you cannot be saved; and the question which now most deeply concerns you is, how you shall obtain it." "But," said the man, "I wish you to tell me how I came by my wicked heart." "I shall not," replied Dr. Nettleton, "do that at present; for if I could do it to your entire satisfaction, it would not in the least help you towards obtaining a new heart. The great thing for which I am

water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17). "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do" (John xiv. 13). "Whosoever" is on the outside of the gate, and lets in all who choose. "Whatsoever" is on the inside, and gives those who enter the free range of all the region and treasury of grace. "Whosoever" makes salvation free, "whatsoever" makes it full.

c Paxton.

a "A powerful argument is here drawn from the tenderness of parental affection, as formerly displayed in so signal a manner in behalf of the nation." — *Henderson.*

b Wordsworth.

v. 16. *J. F. Durand*, i. 35; *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kgs.* 305.

c Dr. Thomas.

a Ex. iv. 21. "It was a hard icy winter with them, because the sun had withdrawn."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The plaintive remonstrance of God's people, the Jews, not unmingled with murmuring and repining against God for His goodness to the Gentiles, and for their own afflictions, which were caused by their own sins."—*Wordsworth.*

"Prayer, thus: "We are become as those over whom Thou never

barest rule (or dilst not rule from ancient time), on whom Thy name was never called.'"—*Nägelsbach.*

v. 17. *Dr. J. Owen*, xvi. 329; *T. T. Haverfield*, i. 176.

c Whitecross.

solicitous is, that you should become a new creature, and be prepared for heaven." As the man manifested no wish to hear anything on that subject, but still pressed the question how he came by his wicked heart, the doctor told him that his condition resembled that of a man who is drowning, while his friends are attempting to save his life. As he rises to the surface of the water, he exclaims, "How came I here?" "That question," says one of his friends, "does not concern you now; take hold of this rope." "But how came I here?" he asks again. "I shall not stop to answer that question now," replies his friend. "Then I'll drown," says the infatuated man, and, spurning all proffered aid, sinks to the bottom.[c]

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-FOURTH.

1—3. (1) **O that**, the language of direct supplication, which is blended with humble confession. **rend the heavens**, as at Sinai.[a] "The heavens appear to be regarded as an outspread tent." **flow down**, better, *tremble, quake.* (2) **melting fire**, or, "as the fire burneth brushwood."[b] **name known**, by the display of Thy revealing and redeeming power. (3) **terrible things**, things full of august and mysterious power: such were the signs at Sinai, and in the Exodus. **camest down**, *i.e.* Thy working for us was Thy coming to us, and such *coming* we ask again.

Conversion of the Jews (*v.* 1).—I. There is a mighty and glorious manifestation of Jehovah prayed on behalf of His ancient people. II. The prayer is enforced by a twofold plea drawn from their former mercies and their present need.[c]

4. not heard, *etc.*,[a] with reference to the signs of God's power and grace alluded to in *v.* 3. "This Divine interposition, and its issues, went beyond all that men had thought possible: for no experience had ever testified of such things."[b] **what he hath**, better, *a God who hath.* **waiteth**, implying faith, hope, and patient acquiescence.

The unknown blessedness of heaven (*v.* 4).—I. The subject of this declaration. 1. What God hath prepared 2. For whom God hath prepared this; every one who waits upon God, none who are destitute of true godliness; 3. How God has prepared this: by His ordination and appointment, by the redeeming work of Christ, and the whole process of salvation. II. The declaration itself. 1. How far are these things known? we know the moral state, and the substance of the enjoyment; 2. Wherein are they so great a secret? we cannot conceive the mode and conditions of our future being. III. There are some means by which we may conceive the grandeur of the glory. 1. The cost of preparation; 2. The character of God; 3. What He actually gives of spiritual enjoyment now.

What St. Paul might now say about heaven.—If St. Paul were now preaching, and pressing this very consideration of the infinite glorious reward, it would possibly be expected that he who suffered a translation, and was admitted as a spy into the Land of Promise, should at his return make some relation of it, and discover something of the riches and glory of that place; and would not all flock about him, as men do about travellers, to

a Ps. lxviii. 7, 8; comp. Ex. xix. 18.

b Gesenius.

"By the action of fire on dry twigs or brushwood, as also on water, noise is produced, and thereby the effect of the phenomena heightened."—*Henderson.*

Mi. i. 4; 2 Pe. iii. 10; Na. i. 5, 6.

v. 1. *W. Reading*, iii. 66; *Dr. H. Draper*, i. 77.

c Prof. Schofield.

a 1 Co. ii. 9.

b Spk. Com.

"That is, although the mercies and miracles of the Exodus and of Sinai were great, yet God has greater in store for His ancient people the Jews. The Holy Spirit, speaking by St. Paul, teaches us that these words refer to the miracles and mercies of the Gospel."—*Wordsworth.*

"The poets fabulously fancied that the giants scaled heaven by heaping mountain upon mountain. What was their fancy is the Gospel truth. If you

inquire a description of the country whence they come, who the people and inhabitants are, what are their manners and customs, what is their employment, who is their king, and what subjection they yield unto him? Thus inquisitive, truly, our curiosity would be; and yet when St. Paul purposely relates his voyage to the other world, all that he speaks of it is only this, "I knew a man caught up into Paradise, and who heard things that no man could, nor is it lawful for any man to utter."[e]

5, 6. (5) meetest, with the signs of gracious acceptance. rejoiceth, in the Lord.[a] remember . . ways, instead of walking in their own ways. those in continuance, prob. meaning, in the ways of God is perpetuity; and contrast is intended "bet. the error and uncertainty of men's ways, and the truth and stability of God's ways."[c] (6) unclean, *i.e.* as those excluded from the congregation.[d] fade, Ps. xc. 5, 6.

Human mortality (*v.* 6).—I. Consider the certainty and universality of death. II. Review the various phases of death. 1. Marvellous diversity in death-bed scenes; 2. Fading leaf reminds us of beauty in death. III. Reflect on the gradual approach of death. IV. Observe the season of death. The mission of the leaf is—1. To shelter the weary; 2. Delight the eye of beauty; 3. Nourish and bless the tree of humanity; 4. Proclaim the wisdom of the Creator. V. Ponder the cause of death. Apply:—1. A word of recapitulation; 2. A word of encouragement.[e]—*A foul wind* (*v.* 6).—Iniquities, like the wind, blow—1. Constantly: 2. Violently; 3. Suddenly; 4. Destructively. The destruction of the wicked cometh—I. Whence? from the presence of the Lord. II. Whither? to the landing-place of sin. 1. The landing will be final; 2. The punishment will be eternal.[f]

The teachings of nature.—That which nature seems perpetually to threaten of herself, can it be hard for us to believe that Christ and His glorious host of angels—who have a power above nature—will be able to effect, when it shall seem good to Him whom God has made visible Judge of the world? Remember what command He had over the elements when He was in the flesh in the lowest state of humiliation, and what power He had over them that for so long time have been permitted to lord it in this grosser elementary world, whose chieftain is called the prince of the air. What is it, then, that He cannot do in His exalted estate, when He returns to judgment in so exceeding great majesty and glory—when He shall descend with the sound of a trump, and face the earth with His bright squadrons, and fill the whole arch of heaven with innumerable legions of His angels of light, the warm gleams of whose presence are able to make the mountains to reek and smoke, and to awake that fiery principle, that lies dormant in the earth, into a devouring flame?[g]

7, 8. (7) stirreth, *etc.*, rouseth himself from spiritual drowsiness. consumed, or melted. "Not Thy wrath, but our sin, is the fire which has consumed us." (8) our father, 1 Chr. xxix. 10: Isa. lxiii. 16. clay, ch. xlv. 9; Ro. ix. 20, 21.[a]

The neglect of prayer (*v.* 7).—I. The nature of prayer. 1. It is calling upon God; 2. It is taking hold of God; 3. It is stirring up oneself to take hold of God. II. The general neglect of prayer. 1. There are some who never pray; 2. Others who only occasionally lift up their hearts in prayer; 3. Others who main-

would get to heaven, you must climb thither by putting Mount Zion upon Mount Sinai."—*Bp. Hopkins.*

c Bp. Hopkins, v. 4. Dr. H. Preston, 59; W. F. Hook, 287.

a Ps. xcvii. 12.

b "The way of God's commandments, and of His providential dispensations."—*J. A. Alexander.*

Isa. lviii. 2, lxiii. 17.

c "The meaning of the whole is this: though we are now punished on account of our transgressions, yet as the ways in which God manifests His goodness are everlasting, we may confidently hope for deliverance."—*Henderson.*

"Unbroken continuity of mercy for the penitent."—*Spk. Com.*

d Le. xiii. 45, 46.

v. 6. *Dr. R. Sibbes,* iii. 344; *H. Worthington,* 431; *T. Scott,* x. 285; *W. Jay,* ii. 72; *Bp. Dehon,* ii. 358; *C. Davy,* i. 125; *J. Foster,* i. 245.

e Stems and Twigs.

f H. T. Miller.

g Sir T. More.

a "Unable to mould themselves aright, they beg the sovereign will of God to mould them unto salvation, even as He made them at the first, and is their Father."—*Fausset.*

tain with constancy an external regard to this duty. III. The consequences of this neglect of prayer; those who are chargeable with this neglect will be visited with the tokens of God's displeasure. 1. He will not reveal to them His glory; 2. He will not manifest to them His love; 3. He will not communicate to them His blessings. Apply:—(1) They who live without prayer should consider these things; (2) They who are formal in prayer should lay them to heart; (3) This subject should be remembered by those who profess godliness.[b]

9—12. (9) **wroth very sore,** Ps. lxxix. 8. **all thy people,** whatever may be our sins and unfaithfulness. This is reminding God of the *covenant.* (10) **cities,** plural bec. Zion is conceived as separate fr. Jerusalem. **wilderness,** or ruin.[a] (11) **house,** or temple. **pleasant things,** or objects of desire. "Our homes, our cities, and all our dear associations." (12) **refrain,** from redeeming and restoring them.[b]

Intercessory prayer.—

When hearts are full of yearning tenderness
For the loved absent, whom we cannot reach
By deed or token, gesture, or kind speech,
The spirit's true affection to express;
When hearts are full of innermost distress,
And we are doomed to stand inactive by,
Watching the soul's or body's agony,
Which human effort helps not to make less,—
Then, like a cup capacious to contain
The overflowings of the heart, is prayer;
The longing of the soul is satisfied,
The keenest darts of anguish blunted are;
And though we cannot cease to yearn or grieve,
Yet we have learned in patience to abide.[c]

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-FIFTH.

1. **am sought,**[a] God's answer to the preceding prayer.[b] Reference is in part to the Gentiles who were brought into the Christian Church.[c] **behold me,** a significant way of expressing the greatest readiness and willingness to give relief. **not .. name,** other, *i.e.,* than God's peculiar people.

Good out of evil.- Some years ago a young man, in one of the civil wars in Syria, was out on a marauding expedition, and took, for his share of the plunder in an enemy's house, a Bible, which somehow or other happened to be there: and on reading it he became enlightened, and in the end found the way of life and peace, and was afterwards the means of bringing many of his neighbours to a knowledge of the truth. A church is very soon to be organised in his native village (one of the highest on the range of Lebanon), and that young man is to be ordained its pastor.[d]

2, 3. (2) **spread .. hands,**[a] the attitude of invitation: Pr. i. 24. **rebellious,** *see* Ro. x. 21. **not good,** or, the very reverse of good. **thoughts,** devices or inventions of wickedness. (3) **gardens,**[b] ch. i. 29. **altars of bricks,** better simply, *bricks,* or tiles, with allusion to the flat roofs of Eastern houses, where the star-worship was practised.

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v. 7. *T. Boston,* iv. 395; *Dr. J. Gill,* i. 216; *F. Wrangham,* i. 139.

v. 8. *Dr. W. Jones,* 138; *T. Blackley,* i. 122.

b G. Brooks.

a "The picture exhibited of the state of Palestine, in this and the following v., is still faithfully correct, as it has been for numerous ages past."—*Henderson.*

b Ps. lxxiv. 10, 11, lxxxiii. 1.

v. 9. *T. Rogers,* ii. 338; *J. Hyatt,* 185.

v. 10. *J. Howe,* vi. 239.

"Humility, like darkness, reveals the heavenly lights."—*Thoreau.*

c Trench.

a Ro. x. 20.
b "He has called His people, but in vain; they have been obstinately deaf to Him, unfaithful and superstitious. The unfaithful shall be punished; but a faithful remnant shall be saved and restored to Zion, and from them the promises shall take effect."—*Mat. Arnold.*
c Ro. ix. 26, 30.
d J. H. Calhoun.
a Mat. xxiii. 37, 38.
b "The gardens and sacred groves of the false gods."—*Mat. Arnold.*
vv. 1, 2. *Dr. R. Gordon,* iv. 93.

Subjugation of the world to God.—On one occasion, during the annual convention of the Society of Friends, at Philadelphia, when that body was engaged on the subject of slavery, as it related to its own members, some of whom had not wholly relinquished the practice of keeping negroes in bondage, a difference of sentiment was manifested as to the course which ought to be pursued. For a moment it appeared doubtful which opinion would preponderate. At this critical juncture, Benerd, who was a leading member of the society, felt a deep interest in the subject of emancipation, and who died in 1784, left his seat, which was in an obscure part of the house, and presented himself, weeping, at an elevated door in the presence of the whole congregation, whom he thus addressed: "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." He said no more. Under the solemn impression which succeeded this emphatic sentence, the proposed measure received the united sanction of the assembly.[c]

A woman of Wakefield, well known to be in very needy circumstances, offered to subscribe a penny a week to the missionary fund. "Surely," said one, "you are too poor to afford this." She replied, "I spin so many hanks of yarn for a maintenance: I will spin one more; and that will be a penny for the society." *c Whitecross.*

4, 5. (4) **graves**, for the sake of getting visions.[a] **swine's flesh**, which was unspeakably offensive to all true-hearted Israelites. **broth**, in wh. the meat was boiled, and having fragments of the abominable meat in it. (5) **holier than thou**, thus showing that, however *superstitious* they might be, they were not righteous; for true righteousness is ever humble. **smoke**, for the fig. comp. Ps. xviii. 8.

Note on vv. 4, 5.—"Come not near to me, for I am holier than thou." Here we have another instance of the glaring wickedness of the Jews, in their imitation of the heathen devotees, who resembled the Hindoo Yogees. Those men are so isolated by their superstition and penances, that they hold but little intercourse with the rest of mankind. They wander about in the dark in the place of burning the dead, or "among the graves;" there they affect to hold converse with evil and other spirits; and there they pretend to receive intimations respecting the destinies of others. They will eat things which are religiously clean or unclean; they neither wash their bodies, nor comb their hair, nor cut their nails, nor wear clothes. They are counted to be most holy among the people, and are looked upon as beings of another world.[b]

"Passing the night on tombs, or in sacred places, for the sake of apparitions and revelations expected there"—*Mat. Arnold.*

"Heaven's gates are wide enough to admit of many sinners, but too narrow to admit of any sin."—*Howels.*

A bag of wind may be mistaken for a sack of corn till it is lifted, or opened. *b Roberts.*

6, 7. (6) **written before me**, indicating that the sentence against the wrongdoers has actually been pronounced and recorded. **their bosom**, fig. taken from the E. custom of carrying things in the ample folds of the *hyke* or cloak. (7) **incense . . mountains**, this is so often mentioned as a characteristic feature of idolatry.[a] **measure**, *etc., i.e.* appropriate punishment to their sin.

Wrath of God restrained.—The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given: and the higher the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course when once it is let loose. If God should only withdraw His hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the

a Isa. lvii. 7, etc.

"The earth is our workhouse, but heaven is our storehouse. This is a place to run in, and that is a place to rest in."—*Secker.*

"The kingdom of heaven is large enough when you get into it, but the gate is so low that you cannot come in save on your knees."—*Talmage.*

strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.[b]

8—10. (8) new . . cluster, "The juice that shall one day be wine is in the grape-cluster, and the grape cluster is preserved for its sake; so Israel shall be preserved for the sake of the life and blessing to come from it."[a] blessing, the Divine favour promised to the patriarchs. (9) my mountains, Palestine regarded as a hilly country, but with special reference to Zion and Moriah. (10) Sharon, the western coast from Joppa to Cæsarea.[b] valley of Achor, on the east side, by Jericho.[c]

First missionaries to the Sandwich Islands opposed by Europeans.—When the first missionaries from America reached the Sandwich Islands, in the spring of 1820, an effort was made by some of the foreigners to have their landing and establishment at the islands forbidden by the Government. With this view, their motives were misrepresented by them to the king and chiefs. It was asserted that, while the ostensible object of the mission was good, the secret and ultimate design was the subjugation of the islands, and the enslavement of the people; and by way of corroboration, the treatment of the Mexicans, and aborigines of South America and the West Indies, by the Spaniards, and the possession of Hindostan by the British, were gravely related. It was in consequence of this misrepresentation that a delay of eight days occurred before the missionaries could secure permission to disembark. In answer to these allegations, the more intelligent of the chiefs remarked: "The missionaries speak well; they say they have come from America only to do us good; if they intend to seize our islands, why are they so few in number? where are their guns? and why have they brought their wives?" To this it was replied, "It is true their number is small; but a few only come now, the more fully to deceive. But soon many more will arrive, and your island will be lost." The chiefs again answered, "They say they will do us good; they are few in number; we will try them for one year, and if we find they deceive us, it will then be time enough to send them away." Permission to land was accordingly granted. Mr. Young, it is said, was the only foreigner who advocated their reception.[d]

11, 12. (11) forsake the Lord, ch. i. 4. troop, Heb. *Gad*, or *luck*. number, Heb. *Meni*, or *fate*, destiny. Babylonian names of two stars, or star deities.[a] (12) number you, a play on the word; apportion you, doom you. called, Pr. i. 24.

Danger of disregarding God (*vv.* 12—14).—Let us consider—I. The evil laid to their charge. 1. We have followed every one of us our own evil ways; 2. We have done this notwithstanding God's efforts to reclaim us. II. The judgments pronounced against them. 1. He will do it in this world; 2. And in the world to come. Address—(1) Those who disregard the warnings of their God: (2) Those who obey Him in spirit and in truth.[b]

A countryman.—Collins, the freethinker, or deist, met a plain countryman going to church. He asked him where he was going. "To church, sir." "What to do there?" "To worship God." "Pray, whether is your God a great or a little God?" "He is both, sir." "How can He be both?" "He is so great, sir, that the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Him; and so

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b Jon. Edwards.

a Mat. Arnold.

"The vine-dresser, as he is about to cut down a degenerate vine, espies a rich cluster on one part, and gives orders that the plant shall not be wholly destroyed; so shall it be now with the vines of Jacob and Judah."—*Spk. Com.*

b Isa. xxxiii. 9.

c Jos. vii. 24; Ho. ii. 15.

r. 8. *R. Taylor*, i. 371.

"As radii in a circle are closest near the centre, and towards the circumference lie more widely apart, the affections of a human heart do and should fall thickest on those who are nearest. Expressly on this principle the Christian mission was instituted at first."—*Arnot.*

d Chevver.

a "The description admirably suits worldly and infidel characters, who not only have no regard for, but laugh at religion; have no god but riches, and regard human affairs as governed by chance."—*Henderson.*

Jer. xliv. 17, 18.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

little that He can dwell in my heart." Collins declared that this simple answer from the countryman had more effect upon his mind than all the volumes which learned doctors had written against him.[c]

13, 14. (13) **eat . . hungry**, forcible contrast of the two lots, based upon the two characters. (14) **vexation**, lit. *breaking*. Contrast the truly broken and contrite heart.

Joy and grief.—It must be observed that the cessation of pleasure affects the mind three ways. If it simply ceases, after having continued a proper time, the effect is indifference; if it be abruptly broken off, there ensues an uneasy sense called disappointment; if the object be so totally lost that there is no chance of enjoying it again, a passion arises in the mind which is called grief. Now, there is none of these, not even grief, which is the most violent, that I think has any resemblance to positive pain. The person who grieves suffers his passion to grow upon him, he indulges it, he loves it; but this never happens in the case of actual pain, which no man ever willingly endured for any considerable time. That grief should be willingly endured, though far from a simply pleasing sensation, is not so difficult to be understood. It is the nature of grief to keep its object perpetually in its eye, to present it in its most pleasurable views, to repeat all the circumstances that attend it, even to the last minuteness, to go back to every particular enjoyment, to dwell upon each, and to find a thousand new perfections in all, that were not sufficiently understood before; in grief, the pleasure is still uppermost, and the affliction we suffer has no resemblance to absolute pain, which is always odious, and which we endeavour to shake off as soon as possible. The *Odyssey* of Homer, which abounds with so many natural and affecting images, has none more striking than those which Menelaus raises of the calamitous fate of his friends, and his own manner of feeling it. He owns, indeed, that he often gives himself some intermission from such melancholy reflections; but he observes, too, that melancholy as they are, they give him pleasure.

> "Still, in short intervals of pleasing woe,
> Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,
> I to the glorious dead for ever dear,
> Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear."[a]

On the other hand, when we recover our health, when we escape an imminent danger, is it with joy that we are affected? The sense on these occasions is far from that smooth and voluptuous satisfaction which the assured prospect of pleasure bestows. The delight which arises from the modifications of pain, confesses the stock from whence it sprung, in its solid, strong, and severe nature.[b]

15, 16. (15) **for a curse**, so that men, when they would curse, shall say, "May your lot be as that of the rebellious Jews." **slay thee**, put generally for bring judgments on thee. **another name**, such as, "the people whom the Lord hath blessed;" or *Christians*. (16) **God of truth**, lit. *the God of Amen*,[a] the God who keepeth covenant.

Lord Lawrence on Indian missions.—At a meeting of the Highbury Auxiliary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, Lord Lawrence (late Governor-General of India) presided, and in the

c R. T. S.

vv. 12–14. *R. P. Buddicom*, 2.

"The joy of the world resembles a torrent. As upon a glut of rain, you shall have a torrent come rolling along with noise and violence, overflowing its banks, and bearing all before it; yet it is but muddy and impure water, and it is soon gone and dried up: such is all the joy this world can give. It makes a great noise, it is commonly immoderate, and swells beyond its due bounds; yet it is but a muddy and impure joy: it soon rolls away, and leaves nothing behind but a drought in the soul. Now, since the world's joy is but such a poor empty thing as this, it is most gross folly for us to lay out our best love upon that which cannot repay us with the best joy."—*Bp. Hopkins.*

a Hom. Od. iv.

b Burke.

a Re. iii. 14.

v. 16. *G. Burnet*, i. 235.

A man on the summit of a lofty mountain commands a wider landscape, and sees things that on the plains below would have been quite invi-

sible. So many things unknown and incomprehensible to us on the plains of earth will be all visible upon the mount of heaven.

b Leis. Hour, Mar. 1871.

course of his remarks, said that he believed the missionaries of the various denominations who were labouring in India were all working together with zeal and self-abnegation, and if there was any body of Englishmen who might be said to go to that country from pure motives, and without any self-interest, it was the missionaries, for they suffered many privations, and to his knowledge sometimes lost their lives among the people to benefit whom they had done everything they possibly could. Much as England had done for India, the missionaries had done more for her than all other agencies combined.[b]

17. **new heavens**, *etc.*, symbol of the new dispensation.[a] To be applied to the times of Messiah. "With the breaking up of the heathen kingdoms and the restoration of Israel begins a new epoch."[b]

New heavens and new earth (*v.* 17).—I. The glorious prospect that is here set before us. 1. The event itself will be most glorious; 2. It may be fitly called a new heaven and a new earth. II. The feelings with which it should be contemplated. We should rejoice—1. For the benefits that will accrue to God's ancient people; 2. To the whole world: 3. For the honour that will arise to God Himself. Address—(1) Those who never yet have tasted of this joy; (2) Those who have reason to hope that this new creation is already begun in them.[c]

The end of the solar system.—When all the phenomena in the heavens indicate a law of progressive creation, in which revolving matter is distributed into suns and planets, there are indications in our own system that a period has been assigned for its duration, which, sooner or later, it must reach. The medium which fills universal space, whether it be a luminiferous ether, or arise from the indefinite expansion of planetary atmospheres, must retard the bodies which move in it, even were it 360,000 millions of times more rare than atmospheric air: and, with its time of revolution gradually shortening, the satellite must return to its planet, the planet to its sun, and the sun to its primeval nebula. The fate of our system, thus deduced from mechanical laws, must be the fate of all others. Motion cannot be perpetuated in a resisting medium; and where there exist disturbing forces, there must be primarily derangement, and ultimately ruin. From the great central mass, heat may again be summoned to exhale nebulous matter; chemical forces may again produce motion, and motion may again generate systems: but, as in the recurring catastrophes which have desolated our earth, the great First Cause must preside at the dawn of each cosmical cycle: and, as in the animal races which were successively reproduced, new celestial creations of a nobler form of beauty and of a higher form of permanence may yet appear in the sidereal universe. "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered." "The new heavens and the new earth shall remain before Me." "Let us look, then, according to this promise, for the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."[d]

18–20. (18) **Jerusalem**, the new, regenerate Jerusalem. (19) **rejoice**, *etc.*, a beautiful description of the millennial happiness of the Jewish people. (20) **infant . . days**, child and man shall alike attain to a patriarchal age. **shall be cursed,**

a Isa. lxvi. 22; 2 Pe. iii. 13; Re. xxi. 1.

b Mat. Arnold. "The creation of the new heavens and the new earth began with the Gospel, and is consummated at the Second Advent."—*Vitringa.*

c C. Simeon, M.A. c. 17. *J. Slade*, ii. 132.

As they who come out of the clear sun into the shadow have their eyes dim and dark: so He who cometh from the contemplation of things Divine into things human cometh from clear light to great clouds, mist, and darkness.

A little Swedish girl was walking with her father one night under the starry sky, intently meditating upon the glories of heaven. At last, looking up to the sky, she said, "Father, I have been thinking if the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, what shall the right side be!"

d N. Brit. Rev. No. 3.

a "The matter is not great whether our lives on earth be long or short, but

i.e. though life shall thus be prolonged, it shall only be a blessing to the good.[a] "Honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time."[b]

The aged sinner (*v.* 20).—I. See the shortness of human life; a man a hundred years old is a wonder. II. See the long-suffering of God; He sees and hates sin, and yet delays the stroke for a hundred years. III. See the malignity of sin; there is no self-restoring power in the soul as is in the body. IV. See the inexhaustibleness of the curse; it is not exhausted by a century. V. See the claims of religion on the aged; depict the dangers of aged sinners.[c]

An old man.—Some years ago, a pious young man was called to visit an aged person, between seventy and eighty, who was dangerously ill. He found him sitting in an arm chair, supported by pillows. "My first inquiry," says he, "was into the state of his mind, which I found to be very dark and ignorant. I endeavoured to direct him to Jesus as the way to salvation, and as the perishing sinner's only friend. I exhorted him also to prayer, earnestly entreating him to avoid delay in this most important concern. For a few minutes he listened with serious attention, and then suddenly burst into a flood of tears, and exclaimed with a loud voice, 'Ah! my young friend, had I thought on these things thirty or forty years ago, what a happy man might I now have been! but now' (wringing his hands) 'it is too late! Hell must be my portion for ever!'"[d]

21—23. (21) and inhabit them, the indication of a secure social state. (22) another inhabit, as in troublous times. days of a tree,[a] perhaps with reference to the tree of life.[b] long enjoy, or shall *wear out*, *i.e.* use to the very utmost. (23) trouble, or calamitous judgments, since these only come upon the disobedient and the ungodly. offspring with them, so as to share in their privileges.

Note on v. 22.—The people of the East have a particular desire for long life; hence one of their best and most acceptable wishes is, "May you live a thousand years." "May you live as long as the Aali tree," *i.e.* the banyan, or *Ficus indica*. I never saw a tree of that description dead, except when struck by lightning. And to cut one down would, in the estimation of a Hindoo, be almost as great a sin as the taking of life. I do not think this tree will die of itself, because it continues to let fall its own supporters, and will march over acres of land if not interrupted. Under its gigantic branches the beasts of the forests screen themselves from the heat of the sun; and under its sacred shade may be seen the most valued temples of the Hindoos.[c]

24, 25. (24) before . . answer,[a] contrast ch. lxiv. 7. (25) wolf, *etc.*, ch. xi. 6, 7. dust . . meat, *i.e.* he shall no more hurt, but be content to feed on dust, Ge. iii. 14.[b] The evil power shall be wholly prostrate.[c]

Providence and prayer (*v.* 24).—I. The character of the people to whom the promise is made. II. The promise itself, namely, that God's eye should be upon their wants, and His ear open unto their prayer. Apply:—What an encouragement God has given to faith and patience.[d]

Mr. Cecil's deliverance.—The sermon, of which the above brief outline is given, was preached by Mr. Cecil at St. John's Chapel, whether we live the lives of saints, or the lives of sinners."—*Mat. Henry.*

b Wisdom of Solomon.

v. 20. *Dr. J. Donne*, iv. 446; *B. Beddome*, ii. 105; *J. Glazebrook*, 298.

c G. Brooks.

"Faith saves, and grace saves; faith as the instrument, and grace as the Divine efficacy; faith the channel, and grace the heavenly stream; faith the finger that touches the garment's fringe, and grace the virtue that pours from the Saviour's heart."—*Dr. Hoge.*

d R. T. S.

a "Man's life shall have, instead of its present brief term, the far longer term allotted to the life of trees."—*Mat. Arnold.*

"A tree may flourish undisturbed in its home in Lebanon for one thousand years."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The tree of life."—*LXX., and Targums.*

c Roberts.

a Ps. xxxii. 5; Da. ix. 20, 21.

b Mi. vii. 17.

c "During the millennium he is to be subject to the lowest degradation."—*Henderson.*

d R. Cecil, M.A.

"What was it by which the Lord prepared Edwards, the Wes-

leys, and Whitefield, to herald the blessed Jesus to the multitudes with such simplicity and power? Just this very experience of full salvation. What was it that gave Luther power to break his own Roman fetters and become the champion of the free? Just this experience of the power of Jesus in him for full salvation." — *W. E. Boardman.*

a J. A. Alexander. *b* "The line of thought appears to be as follows: The temple is going to be rebuilt, and men's thoughts will be concentrated upon this work made with hands; in Bab. the unfaithful Jews have just shown, by even adopting the rites and sacrifices of the heathen, how prone men are to rely upon the outward parts of religion; at this moment, therefore, God will declare that what He regards is not these things, but inward religion; lowliness, contrition, and awe of His Word."—*Mat. Arnold.* *c Prov. Davies.* *d* De. xxiii. 18. "The dog was an abomination according to Jewish law, possibly bec. it was venerated in Egypt."—*Fausset.* *e* "Their wayward, childish follies, which in the end would mock them with grievous disappointment."—*Spk. Com.*

Bedford Row, on Sunday morning, January 23, 1803. Mr. Cecil had recently met with a remarkable deliverance, Wednesday, January 12th, when, in consequence of his horse falling upon some ice, Mr. Cecil was thrown off upon his face, at the moment that a heavily-loaded cart was passing. His shoulder was in the track of the cart-wheel, and he distinctly felt it go over him, and bear against him. The crown of his hat was considerably pressed in, by the wheel, against his temples. Had he been thrown a few inches further, it must have gone directly over his head. In this situation of danger he was, however, mercifully preserved from broken bones or instant death. He hung up his hat in his study, with the indentation and dirt, as a memento. His reflections on this event may be seen in his Memoirs by Mrs. Cecil, *Works of the Rev. R. Cecil*, edited by the Rev. J. Pratt.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-SIXTH.

1, 2. (1) **thus . . Lord,** "winding up the prophetic discourse with an express prediction of the change of dispensation, and a description of the difference between them."[a] **my throne,** ch. vi. 1; Ac. vii. 48—50. **my footstool,** ch. lx. 13, "place of my feet." **house . . me,** *comp.* 1 Ki. viii. 27. **my rest,** or abiding. (2) **hand made,** they are things, and God wants response from *men*, the free beings in His own likeness. **poor,** *etc.*,[b] ch. lvii. 15. **trembleth . . word,** Ezr. ix. 4. x. 3.

God's compassion for the poor and contrite (*v.* 2).—I. Let us look into the import of each of these characters. 1. The poor, sensible of his own insufficiency, deep humility and self-abasement, sensible of his need of the Holy Spirit, an importunate beggar at the throne of grace; 2. Contrite, broken, bruised, heartbroken with fears; 3. Trembleth at My word. II. The Divine blessing bestowed upon them: He does not look as a careless spectator, but as a Father, Friend, Benefactor; His looks are efficacious, compassionate, discriminating. Consider—1. The perfection and condescension of God as illustrated by this subject; 2. What must it be to be out of His favour![c]

3, 4. (3) **killeth an ox,** merely as a formality. **as if,** *i.e.* he is as offensive before God as if his act were a direct violation of law. **lamb,** or kid. **dog's neck,**[d] throughout Scrip. the dog is treated as unclean and offensive. **oblation,** gift of thanksgiving. **swine's blood,** ch. lxv. 4. (4) **choose their delusions,**[e] *i.e.* take them into notice, and visit them with judgments. **none . . answer,** ch. lxv. 12.[c]

An empty religion.—The missionary establishments on the West Coast are representative of all the Christian Churches, and of many nationalities in our possessions; the Wesleyans being, after the Church of England, the most successful and energetic. English, German, American, French, and Portuguese are at work. The missionaries of the last two nations confine themselves to the people living under the rule of their respective governments, and are, of course, Roman Catholics. The Portuguese, who have been on the coast longer than any other nation, and who have left signs of their occupancy at one time in almost every place of importance, have had mission stations in many

places now abandoned, and in their own province of Angola large and substantial churches and convents are to be seen falling to ruin. Some outward effects of their teaching may be seen at Laoanda, such as pens, paper, and slates, which, as articles of trade, are sent up the Coanza River to a coffee-producing tribe, who have no missionaries among them at present. There was only one instance that came under the notice of the *Times'* correspondent where there were any religious observances among the people after the missionaries had left, and the results were scarcely such as can be deemed satisfactory. It was at the island of Annabon, which contains about 600 inhabitants, and no less than thirty-two churches, with a native priest who calls himself bishop and schoolmaster. Each of these churches was furnished with an altar, before which burnt a lamp, and was adorned with the image or picture of some saint. Baptism and other Christian rites were administered, and monogamy was observed. On the other hand, the women were little better treated by their husbands than their sisters on the Continent. Moreover, these islanders were certainly not less superstitious than their pagan brethren, and mixed up many of their old fetish customs with their Christian observances. They had a strong belief in ghosts; and, adds the writer already quoted, "they were poor and dirty, keen traders, great rogues, fond of rum—even the 'Bishop'—and I can't say their Christianity improved them."[d]

5. tremble . . word, *v.* 2, addressed to the faithful part of the nation. **to your joy,**[a] yours who remained steadfast through all calamity.

The God of the humble.—Though God dwelleth not in temples made with hands—though He pours contempt upon princes—yet there are persons whom His gracious eye will regard. "The high and lofty One, that dwelleth in the high and holy place," He will look down through all the shining ranks of angels upon—whom? "to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit." This man can never be lost, or overlooked among the multitude of creatures, but the eyes of the Lord will discover him in the greatest crowd. His eyes will graciously fix upon this man, this particular man, though there were but one such in the compass of the creation, or though he were banished into the remotest corner of the universe, like a diamond in a heap of rubbish, or at the bottom of the ocean.[b]

6, 7. (6) **voice of noise,** the Prophet here supposes the Divine deliverance and restoration to be taking place, and notes its suddenness and rapidity.[c] (7) **man child,** if this passage be taken to refer to the Roman siege, the man child may be the Messiah, Immanuel.

Fading as a leaf (*v.* 6).—This is a truth beyond dispute. 1. It is true as to the certainty of human mortality: 2. As to its imperceptible process: 3. The need that we should be reminded of this truth, because of the moral indifference to it, because the bright and verdant aspect of life is always before us. I. We do not perish as a leaf. II. We are not forgotten as a leaf. III. The Gospel cheers us in this fading condition. IV. The ripening of the soul for glory may be going on in the midst of the fading.[b]

Autumn tints.—The poets have discoursed eloquently on the

c Pr. i. 24; Je. vii. 13.

r. 3. *Saurin*, viii. 496.

"Faith cannot scale the dreadful precipice from which nature has fallen, but it can lay hold on the rope which grace has let down even into his hands from the top, and which will draw up again with all the burden faith can bind to it. And this is all the mystery of faith's saving Christ reaches down from heaven, and faith reaches up from earth, and each hand grasps the other; one in weakness, the other in power." —*Dr. Hoge.*

d *Cassell's Ill. Travels.*

a Comp. Lu. vi. 22.

"The humble man lives according to a rule, and with compliance to public customs, without any affectation of singularity." —*Jeremy Taylor.*

b *Pres. Davies.*

"Humility is the Christian's greatest honour; and the higher men climb the farther they are from heaven."— *Burrows.*

a "Four years before the Roman siege of Jerusalem, one Jesus, the son of Ananus, cried out in the temple and through the streets of Jerusalem—A voice from the East, a voice from the West, a voice from the four winds; a voice against Jerusalem and the sanctuary; a voice against

bridegrooms and brides, a voice against the whole people.'"—*Josephus.*

b Studies for the Pulpit.

"The heathen knew better how to join and read the mystical letters of nature than we Christians, who cast a more careless eye on these common hieroglyphics, and disdain to suck divinity from the flowers of nature."—*Religio Medici, Sir T. Browne.*

"What was it that gave the Apostles power to come forth into the light themselves, and shed the light in such effulgence upon a benighted world? Christ the Sun of Righteousness risen in their own souls."—*W. E. Boardman.*

c Once a Week.

a Wordsworth.

"It is the great design of the Gospel to restore us to holiness as well as to happiness. Hence the law, in the commands of it, runs through all the gracious dispensations of God to fallen man. Nor will God have any regard to them in a way of grace, who have no regard to His law in a way of obedience. The law constantly requires and points out our duty; it shows us "rich brown tints" of autumn woods; and certainly there is nothing more beautiful than the hundred and one changing hues of gold, yellow, and russet brown which make a sunset walk in the country so charming in the late days of September. But chemistry and poetry are not the same thing. The leaves of plants in a state of complete vitality and growth are, more or less, bright green; in a state of less vitality or change, they assume a more or less red, scarlet, or bright orange-brown tint; till, in death and decomposition, they change to a dull brown or black colour. The red colour is often produced in spots where the leaves have been injured by insects. The principle on which the leaves of trees receive their different colours is still matter of discussion; but it has been discovered that there are several distinct groups of colouring matter on which plants depend for their hues. The normal green is a mixture of two or more colouring matters; and it is doubtful if any leaves are coloured by one single substance. Generally, in fact, they contain not only colours belonging to several groups, but even more than one of the same group. The colouring matter which gives rise to the red patches in the beautiful variegated leaves of some of the geraniums in our gardens is the same as that met with in the flowers of particular species. The purple colour of the leaves of turnips is the same as that of the purple flowers of the common garden stock. But, curiously, the colour which gives rise to the dark brown tint of heath in autumn appears to be the same as that of the purple beech; and that which we find in the dark leaves of ivy seems to correspond with the fine, deep pink colour developed in many leaves only in autumn, so as to produce the brilliant red and scarlet which have such a fine effect on certain kinds of scenery. A curious fact may be noticed with regard to scarlet leaves, that, when they are digested in hot water, the red colour comes away, and leaves them green, yellow, or brown, as the case may be. Reverting, however, to our autumn tints, we may conclude that they are nothing more or less than the signs of decomposition; and this may be remarked by another fact—the unhealthy branches of a tree turn yellow, while the rest of a tree remains green.*c*

8, 9. (8) **earth . . day,** *comp.* Ro. viii. 22. **a nation,** with prob. allusion to the Gentile nations. "The Prophet contrasts the rapid growth of the Israel of God (the Universal Church) after the coming of Christ, with the slow progress of the Old Israel."*a* (9) **bring to the birth,** alluding to the earthly history of God's people as the preparation for Messiah.

Blessings of foreign missions.—The Calvinistic Churches of New England, as we remember them, were stern guardians of the lives of their members. Falseness, impurity, dishonesty, want of rectitude in any of the social relations, were visited with rigorous discipline. If a church member "failed" in business it was *prima facie* evidence of something wrong which was to be looked into by his brethren before he could again be regarded as in "full standing." Not less was it distinguished for active, self-denying benevolence. It was the originator of most of the practical reforms and charities of New England. We know that it is the fashion among "liberal" people to sneer at its enterprise of foreign missions as a piece of canting, mock philanthropy; but surely it should be a defence against the charge of coolly

adjudging millions to eternal woe, and "thinking not much of it." It so took on its heart the burden of that great peril, that money, and home, and country, and life itself were counted as nothing, if by the sacrifice a few immortal souls might be saved. And wherever, over the wide earth, it has gone on this errand of mercy, it has carried Christian civilisation with it. It has taught the converted heathen to be clean, decent, industrious, thriving, to build better houses, to use better agricultural and mechanical implements, to establish schools, to form virtuous families, to become in every respect worthier members of human society. And nearly all the work in this gigantic undertaking has been done by Calvinistic ministers.[b]

10, 11. (10) **rejoice**, *etc.*, the Jerusalem here referred to is the *spiritual* Jerusalem. **mourn for her**, despairingly, as if she were dead. (11) **consolations**, those granted so abundantly to her, in the mercy of her God.[a]

God delights to comfort His people (*vv.* 10—13).—I. A general view of the consolations which God has prepared for His people. 1. In the work and offices of His Son; 2. In the fulness and stability of His covenant; 3. In the richness and variety of His ordinances; 4. In the gifts and trials of His ministers. II. A more particular view of them as represented in the image before us. 1. His attention to our wants; 2. His sympathy with us in our troubles; 3. His forbearance towards us in our perverseness; 4. His affectionate endearments. Address—(1) Those who are strangers to our Jerusalem; (2) Those who love and mourn for her.[b]

12—14. (12) **peace**, wh. carries with it the assurance of prosperity. The word *extend* means *turn*, and it suggests that Israel had herself hindered the flowing of the stream of peace towards her. **glory . . Gentiles**, ch. lx. 4, 5. (13) **mother comforteth**, *i.e.* with an infinite tenderness. (14) **like an herb**, or. as the young grass. **hand**, *etc.*, stretched out in judgment, and in the punishment of His enemies.

God's love and a mother's (*v.* 13).—I. God has a mother's simplicity of instruction. II. God has more than a mother's favouritism. III. God has more than a mother's capacity for attending to little cares. IV. God has more than a mother's patience for the erring. V. God has more than a mother's way of putting a child to sleep.[a]

Carrying children in the East.—Labour in the East, as in all uncivilised countries, falls principally to the lot of the women. It is possible that from this cause they cannot so well carry their young children in their arms, and hence the custom of their sitting across their mothers' hips, or. as rendered in Bible words, being "borne upon her sides." For example, in India the women grass-cutters are out the whole day, searching for the fine grass required for the horses of the regiments. Towards evening they may be seen returning with their bundles on their heads. One hand is generally up to keep their burden in its right position, while the vacant arm is round the waist of a young child, seated across its mother's hip. It is astonishing, the ease and comfort with which, in this manner, they are enabled to carry their little ones; and how, with their arms comparatively unemployed, they can the more easily, and with less fatigue, perform the duties allotted them.

our sin, it lays us under condemnation, and makes us seek a refuge in the Gospel of forgiveness. Now the Gospel is not prepared for such as knowingly and wilfully renounce the law of God, which is holy, and just, and good, and who persist in this practice, and abandon its precepts."—*Watts.*

b Amer. Paper.

a "All who mourn for the destruction of the material fabric of the city and temple, are exhorted to wipe away their tears, and to join in a song of joy and thanksgiving to God for the spiritual birth of all nations from her womb."—*Wordsworth.*

b C. Simeon, M.A. v. 12. *E. M. Goulburn*, 229; *W. Cradock, Divine Drops*, 53.

a Dr. Talmage.

"A great step is gained when a child has learned that there is no connection between liking a thing and doing it."—*Hare.*

"As life and death are in the power of the tongue, so, also, we may well say, life and death are in the education of our children: for, if they be well brought up, it shall be life unto them; but, if it be otherwise, they be trained up to everlasting death."—*Cawdray.*

15, 16. (15) with fire, the symbol of avenging wrath. (16) plead, or enter into judgment.[a] all flesh, not the Jews only, but all humanity.

Wrath of God.—A timorous man can fancy vast and terrible fears, fire, sword, tempests, racks, furnaces, scalding lead, boiling pitch, running bell-metal, and being kept alive in all these to feel their torment; but these come far short of the wrath of God: for, first, there are bounds set to the hurting power of a creature; the fire can burn, but it cannot drown: the serpent can sting, but he cannot tear in pieces. Secondly, the fears of the heart are bounded within those narrow apprehensions, which itself can frame of the hurts which may be done. But the wrath of God proceeds from an infinite justice, and is executed by an omnipotent and unbounded power, comprising all the terror of all other creatures (as the sun doth all other light) eminently and excessively in it; it burns, and drowns, and tears, and stings, and bruises, and consumes, and nature can feel much more than reason is able to comprehend.[b]

17, 18. (17) swine's flesh, *v.* 3.[a] mouse, or Jerboa, larger than an ordinary mouse, and abounding in the fields. (18) gather all nations, to the revelation of the Divine judgment. See Joel iii. 2; Zep. iii. 7—9.

The Jews to convert the Gentiles (*vv.* 18—20).—I. God's purpose respecting the Gentile world—1. Proclaimed by all the Prophets; 2. Assuredly to be fulfilled in its season. II. The instrumentality by which He will effect it. 1. By the ministry of the Jews: 2. The success that shall attend their labour. Apply:—(1) Of what importance the conversion of the Jews is to the whole world; (2) What are those points to which we most particularly attend in our own conversion?[b]

Note on v. 17.—Not only sacred groves in general, but the centres of such groves in special, were, as the Abbé Banier has observed, made use of for temples by the first and most ancient heathens. Some one tree in the centre of each such grove was usually had in more eminent and special veneration, being made the penetrale or more sacred place, which, doubtless, they intended as the anti-symbol of the tree of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil, in the midst of the garden of Eden. To this strange abuse alludes that prophetic censure of some, who sanctified and purified themselves with the waters of their sacred fountains and rivers in the gardens or groves, behind one tree in the midst.[c]

19. a sign,[a] standard or signal, to which the gathering shall be. that escape, the remnant: with prob allusion to the first Christian preachers. Pul, perhaps *Libya*.[b] Lud, Eze. xxx. 5. Tubal, and Javan, Ge. x. 2. isles, western lands of the Gentile world.

Jewish belief with respect to the resurrection of the dead.—Following unconsciously the lead of infidel prejudices, it has latterly been too much the custom to consider the doctrine of the resurrection as unknown to, or at least imperfectly understood among, the ancient Jews. Nothing can be more untrue: "the glorious hope of immortality" lives in their sacred literature, and inspires their oldest formularies of praise. "We hope in Thee, O Lord God, that we shall see Thy power and glory, when

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a Lu. xix. 27; Re. xix. 21.

"If thou desire rest unto thy soul, be just; he that doth no injury fears not to suffer injury; the unjust mind is always in labour; it either practises the evil it hath projected, or projects to avoid the evil it hath deserved."—*Quarles.*

b Bp. Reynolds.

a "Swine are always spoken of in the Old and New Testaments with horror and disgust; partly on account of their dirty habits, the supposed unwholesomeness of their flesh, their occasional carnivorous ferocity, and, above all, their association with many forms of paganism."—*Bib. Things.*

b C. Simeon, M.A. "He who is only just is cruel. Who upon the earth could live, were all judged justly?"—*Byron.*

c Burder.

a "A banner on a high place, to indicate the place of meeting for the dispersed Jewish exiles, preparatory to their return to their land."—*Fausset.*

b "Phul is the country mentioned with Lud in Eze. xxvii. 10, and by him there called *Phut*, where the Greek

Thou wilt wipe away all iniquity from the face of the earth, and make the world subject to the kingdom of Shadai," is an apostrophe in a still used public ritual; and in the thirteenth article of the Jewish creed the doctrine stands simply stated thus:—"I believe with a perfect faith that the dead will be raised to life, when it shall be decreed by the Creator, whose name be blessed, and whose memory be exalted through time and eternity;" but rabbinical superstition has gone beyond this enunciation, and has proceeded to describe the actual details of the revivification in the traditional legends of the Talmud. According to this authority every part of the human frame returns, after death, to dust, except the last vertebra of the spine, called by them the bone *leuz*, the *os coccygis* of anatomists. This, almost the least portion of the skeleton, continues indestructible, and contains, as it were, the germ of the future being. The curious passage on which this theory is founded deserves to be subjoined; it runs thus:—"When Adrianus was bruising of bones, he asked Rabbi Jehoshuang the son of Hhaniuah, 'From what will God at the latter end revive man?' He said, 'From leuz of the backbone.' He said to him, 'Whence dost thou know it?' He answered. 'Get it me, and I will inform you.' Adrianus procured one, and he (R. Jehoshuang) endeavoured to grind it in a mill, but it would not grind. He endeavoured to burn it in a fire, but it would not burn. He put it into water, and it was not dissolved. He put it upon a garment, and struck it with a hammer, but the garment was rent, and the hammer split, and the bone was not diminished."[c] Idle as is this legend, it is supposed to be countenanced by the prophecy of Isa. lxvi. 19; and on a perversion of that and similar texts is founded the rabbinical theory that shortly before the last day, at the second blast of the trumpet of woe, a heavy dew will arise and completely cover the earth, and being gifted with vivific power will reanimate the remains of the dead. Then, no matter to what part of the earth scattered, or under what coverings concealed, the bone leuz will swell and expand to a considerable size; next, from the former part of junction, bone by bone, cartilage by cartilage, the whole of the body will be produced, and head, arms, and legs, with their enveloping muscles, be again developed, and the entire man, perfect in physical frame and personal identity, restored. Not, however, as most sects believe, naked, but invested with the veritable garments, also recreated, with which the deceased was interred. Lastly, the command of Deity will be sent forth by the archangels to inspire the dead to life, and then absolutely reanimated and perfectly conscious, with a memory intensified by suspense, and unfailing from the presence of the Divine, the soul and body will await the opening of the dreadful registers of heaven, and the verdict of the angel by whom the good and evil actions of every individual will be weighed. In all this one cannot fail to be struck by strong parallelisms and as great divergences between the Jewish dogma and the orthodox faith, details of doctrine crossing each other as at certain nodes, where the finite has submitted to the inspiration of the infinite, and running into absurdities, physical and spiritual, where human imagination has striven to become wise above that which is written.

20, 21. (20) **brethren**, Gentiles who accept the Christian faith. **offering**, ch. lx. 7; Ro. xv. 16. **litters**, or coaches.[a] and the Vulgate translate *Libyans* An African people is meant, and an African people famous for the use of the bow, wh. the Ethiopians, for example, were."—*Mat. Arnold.*

"God has filled all nature with continual emblems of this doctrine. He has given a great number of illustrations in the arrangements of nature and Providence. What is night but the death of day? What is morning but its resurrection from the shades of darkness? What is winter but the death of the year? In the dead leaves you see emblems of death scattered wherever you go. What is spring but a resurrection? Look at that unsightly seed without any appearance of life thrown into the earth; and then the particles separating, there springs up the plant! Behold it unfolding, and budding, and blossoming, and casting its fragrance all around: that is its resurrection. We see the insect tribe give their evidence; living frequently and absolutely in different states and elements; sometimes crawling, as a worm, then lying in apparent torpor; then bursting the shell, and with wings of beauty and activity skimming the atmosphere."—*R. Watson.*

swift beasts, specially trained riding camels. (21) of them, *i.e.* of the Gentiles. priests, breaking down the barrier that confined the ministerial office to the sons of Aaron, and family of Levi.

Note on v. 20.—The editor of the *Ruins of Palmyra* tells us, that the caravan they formed, to go to that place, consisted of about two hundred persons, and about the same number of beasts of carriage, which were an odd mixture of horses, camels, mules, and asses; but there is no account of any vehicle drawn on wheels in that expedition; nor do we find an account of such things in other Eastern journeys. There are, however, some vehicles among them used for the sick, or for persons of high distinction. So Pitts observes, in his account of his return from Mecca, that at the head of each division some great gentleman or officer was carried in a thing like a horse-litter, borne by two camels, one before and another behind, which was covered all over with searcloth, and over that again with green broadcloth, and set forth very handsomely. If he had a wife attending him, she was carried in another. This is apparently a mark of distinction. There is another Eastern vehicle used in their journeys, which Thevenot calls a conne. He tells us, the counes are hampers, like cradles, carried upon camels' backs, one on each side, having a back, head, and sides, like the great chairs sick people sit in. A man rides in each of these counes, and over them they lay a covering, which keeps them both from the rain and sun, leaving, as it were, a window before and behind upon the camel's back. The riding in these is also, according to Maillet, a mark of distinction; for, speaking of the pilgrimage to Mecca, he says ladies of any figure have litters; others are carried sitting in chairs, made like covered cages, hanging on both sides of a camel: and as for ordinary women, they are mounted on camels without such conveniences, after the manner of the Arab women, and cover themselves from sight, and the heat of the sun, as well as they can, with their veils. These are the vehicles which are in present use in the Levant. Coaches, on the other hand, Dr. Russell assures us, are not in use in Aleppo; nor do we meet with any account of their commonly using them in any other part of the East; but one would imagine that, if ever such conveniences as coaches had been in use, they would not have been laid aside in countries where ease and elegance are so much consulted.[b]

22—24. (22) new heavens, ch. lxv. 17. your seed . . name, as the restored ones, the holy people: or, we may say, the Christian Church. (23) all flesh, the new dispensation, in Christ, being in no sense exclusive, but embracing all humanity.[a] (24) go forth, "outside the limits of the new earth." worm not die, Mk. ix. 44. The idea seems to be, that the worm shall not cease his corrupting work until it is complete, and the body changed and destroyed. So it is a strong fig. for overwhelming and complete destruction.[b]

Creation and the Christian.—In truth, Scripture has made creation to a Christian a beautiful type and eloquent preacher of Christ. There is not an object in nature that does not remind him of the Saviour, either as shadowing out, by typical resemblance, some of His Divine attributes, or as linked with some lesson of Divine wisdom and love that fell from His lips. He

c Bereshith Rabboth, sec. 28.

a "The Gentiles are here represented as using their modes of conveyance in bringing the Jews back to Jerusalem."—*Fausset.*

b Paxton.

"Before the eleventh century none of the great cities of the present day were paved, except Rome and Cordova. Paris did not enjoy this advantage, according to Rigord, physician and historian to Philippe-Auguste, who relates that the king, being at the window of his palace, which commanded a view of the Seine, perceived that the carriages passing in the mire diffused a most offensive odour, which induced him to issue an order for the paving of the streets, notwithstanding the expense of it; the dread of incurring which he was aware, had hitherto deterred his predecessors. Since that period the city took the name of Paris, instead of Lutetia, which originated in the number of its sloughs. Even London was not paved at that time; many of its principal streets were not thus improved till the fifteenth century. Holborn was done in 1417.—*Sharpe.*

a "Every part irradiated by the glory of the throne of grace."—*Spk. Com.*

cannot look up, without beholding, with the eye of faith, the glory of the "Sun of righteousness, the bright and morning Star." He cannot look around, without thinking of the "Rock of ages; the righteous Branch; the Rose of Sharon; the true Vine." The sower sowing his seed; the reapers in the harvest-field: the fisherman casting his net into the sea—all awaken associations connected with His name and cause. Not a bird of the air, nor a flower of the field, but speaks to his heart of the watchfulness and tenderness of a Saviour's care. To him the face of nature is as a bright and beautiful mirror, in which that Saviour's image is reflected; and His voice is heard by him in every melody that meets his ear. And it is only a Christian can understand the exquisite pleasure which flows into his soul when, as he walks abroad through nature's scenes, sweet thoughts of Him, who is the Beloved of his soul, are suggested by every object around, which, by reminding him of some of the Redeemer's loveliest traits of character, some of His gracious offices, or some of His most precious gifts, draw his heart closer to Him, in the bonds of gratitude, adoration, and love. And such feelings, while they sanctify, additionally exalt and sweeten the enjoyment which the beautiful scenery of nature supplies.[c]

Earth no resting place.—

I am weary of life; I am tired of the earth;
Of its dark sorrows, and boisterous mirth;
Of its changeful scenes, and uncertain joys,
Its woe that frowns, and its pleasure that cloys;
Of its charms that delude the youthful breast:
Would I could find me a place of rest!

I sought in a land far across the sea,
Where the flowers came forth in radiancy,
Where shone the clearest and sunniest sky;
But, alas! I found that the flowers would die;
That clouds would o'ershadow the heaven's blue breast.
And I left it—for me 'twas no place of rest.

I returned again, the place of my birth,
But change sad came on its cheerful hearth;
Some were now wanderers o'er the far wave,
Some were at peace in the lonely grave;
There are still some hearts that were not estranged;
But, except their affections, all things were changed.

There were voices beloved, but the tremulous tone
Told of the years that had over them gone;
There were brows that, scarce touched by Time's darkening wing,
Looked like the lingering flowers of spring;
There were smiles, but they only shone on decay,
Like the fading light on the dying day.

There were heads with whose sunny clust'ring hair
Was mingled the early snow of care;
There were eyes, but where was their once bright hue?—
A mist of tears had come over their blue.
Oh! I brooked not to look on such altered things,
And I stayed not there in my wanderings.

b Comp. term "everlasting burnings," Isa. xxxiii. 14. "The language here employed afterwards became proverbial among the Jews, in application to the punishment of the wicked." —*Henderson.*

c Hugh White. "Not a flower but shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain, of His unrivall'd pencil. He inspires their balmy odours, and imparts their hues, and bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes in grains as countless as the seaside sands, the forms with which He sprinkles all the earth." —*Cowper.*

"It is the glory of the world that He who formed it dwelt on it; of the air, that He breathed it; of the sun, that it shone on Him; of the ground, that it bore Him; of the sea, that He walked on it; of the elements, that they nourished Him; of the waters, that they refreshed Him; of us men, that He lived and died among us, yea, that He lived and died for us; that He assumed our flesh and blood, and carried it to the highest heavens, where it shines as the eternal ornament and wonder of the creation of God." —*J. Maclaurin.*

"Julius Cæsar coming towards Rome with his army, and hearing the senate

and people had fled from it, said, 'They that will not fight for this city, what city will they fight for?' If we will not take pains for the kingdom of heaven, what kingdom will we take pains for?" —*T. Watson.*

"Who," saith an old divine, "chides a servant for taking away the first course at a feast when the second consists of far greater delicacies?" Who then can feel regret that this present world passeth away, when he sees that an eternal world of joy is coming? The first course is grace, but the second is glory, and that is as much better as the fruit is better than the blossom.

I went to fair cities, and in the crowd
I mingled awhile with the gay and the proud;
I strove to be happy—I strove to smile;
But the days passed heavily on the while;
And tho' every hour with pleasure was fraught,
It bore not within it the peace I sought.

I fled away into solitude;—
I hoped to find quiet by mountain and wood;
But, alas! when the spirit would use its wings,
And mingle with grand and glorious things,
'Tis fettered by clay to its mortal sphere,—
Rest there was none for my bosom here.

I sat me down 'neath the midnight sky,
The bright stars sparkled like gems on high;
Before me lay the mighty deep
Still murmuring on in its peaceless sleep;
And I thought, as I looked on its heaving breast,
There is indeed no place of rest.

But there a still small voice thro' the gloom,—
"Thing of the dust, return thee home;
Is it thine to repine at the will of Him
Before whom yon glorious stars are dim!"
Oh! then, pray that thy sins be forgiven,
And hope for a resting-place in heaven!

Brown.

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